APRIL 1953
HARLHAM COLLEGE
LIBRARY

COMMENTARY

Our Unspoken National Faith — DANIEL J. BOORSTIN
The Cold War Perspective Without Stalin — GEORGE LICHTHEIM
Point Fourism Is Not Enough — G. F. HUDSON
Tokyo's Nipponese-Jewish Friendship League — ARNOLD J. WOLF
Are We Israelis Still Jews? — ERNST SIMON
The Outlook for Labor Under Eisenhower — A. H. RASKIN
Black and White Unite—A Story — MARVIN ELKOFF
Israel's Left Reels to the Shock of "Prague" — MARK ALEXANDER
March 1953—A Poem — BARBARA GUEST
From the American Scene
Madame Vishnak and the Victrola — MORRIS FREEDMAN
Cedars of Lebanon
Letter to His Translator — MAIMONIDES
On the Horizon
Passover on the Mountain — M. K. WANKOWICZ
The Study of Man
America's Ethnic Pattern — NATHAN GLAZER

BOOKS IN REVIEW

aul Kecskemeti — Marcia E. Allentuck — Edward N. Saveth
Hal Lehrman — Isa Kapp

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

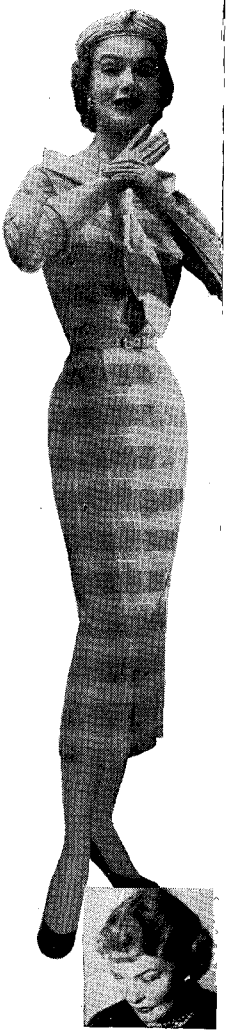
50c

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pauline Trigere, award-winning designer: "This dress reveals your figure boldly! It's for *you*—*if* you wear a Playtex!" Playtex works figure-slimming magic without a seam, stitch or bone . . . it's invisible, even under this sheath!

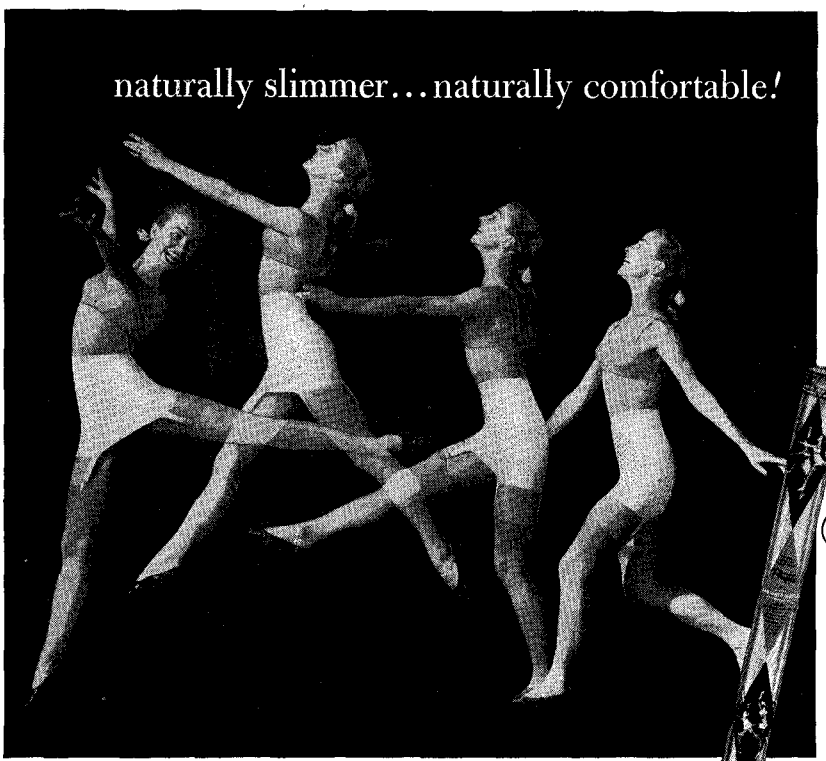
Philip Mangone, designing genius: "My suits blend slimness and a fluid ease of motion, look their best over a Playtex Girdle!" Made of miracle latex with *all-way* control, Playtex slims you by *inches* . . . leaves you wonderfully free!

Monte Sano, American suit designer, says: "The secret of a successful suit is the long, smooth body line—and the secret of *that* is Playtex!" All-way stretching, all-way slimming Playtex controls, moulds you from waist to thigh!



FOUR LEADING AMERICAN DESIGNERS SHOW WHY

Only a PLAYTEX® Girdle reveals your own true figure...



Jane Derby, famous for sophisticated style: "I design for slend[er] elegance—but I want *you* to b[e] comfortable. I suggest a Playte[x] Girdle!" It's naturally slimming and the cloud-soft fabric is s[o] comfortable next to your skin!

Invisible *Playtex*

FABRIC-LINED

Girdles from $4.95

Other Playtex Girdles from $3.50

(Prices slightly higher outside U.S.A.)

At department stores and specialty shops. Playtex, known everywhere as the girdle in the SLIM tube.

©1953 International Latex Corp'n. . . . PLAYTEX PARK . . . Dover Del. Playtex Ltd., Montreal, Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, *the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture.*

The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY'S *contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. Its sponsorship of* COMMENTARY *is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.*

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

JACOB BLAUSTEIN, *President*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thanks to Kleinert's **Softex Baby Pants**

are waterproofed without rubber!

These wonderful pants actually help prevent diaper rash and chafing. They CAN'T stick to or "heat up" baby! They're so safe and so soft, even a new *infant* can wear them night and day.

You see, Softex baby pants are waterproofed *without* rubber . . . that's what makes them so different. Softex can't crack, peel or stiffen. Washes and dries in seconds; stays soft through countless washings!

Softex baby pants never bind baby's legs or tummy! They come in nursery colors and white. They're made ONLY by Kleinert's; come in all sizes.

Silk Softex Baby Pants . . . $1.00

® Kleinert's *famous for dress shields too.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

APRIL 1953 VOLUME 15, NUMBER 4

Our Unspoken National Faith	*Daniel J. Boorstin*	327
The Cold War Perspective Without Stalin	*George Lichtheim*	338
March 1953—A Poem	*Barbara Guest*	345
Point Fourism Is Not Enough	*G. F. Hudson*	346
Tokyo's Nipponese-Jewish Friendship League	*Arnold Jacob Wolf*	352
Are We Israelis Still Jews?	*Ernst Simon*	357
The Outlook for Labor Under Eisenhower	*A. H. Raskin*	365
Black and White Unite—A Story	*Marvin Elkoff*	374
Israel's Left Reels to the Shock of "Prague"	*Mark Alexander*	379
From the American Scene		
Madame Vishnak and the Victrola	*Morris Freedman*	390
Cedars of Lebanon		
Letter to His Translator	*Maimonides*	393
On the Horizon		
Passover on the Mountain	*M. K. Wankowicz*	396
The Study of Man		
America's Ethnic Pattern	*Nathan Glazer*	401
Letters from Readers		409
Books in Review		
Socialism and American Life, edited by Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons	*Paul Kecskemeti*	414
Three Books on Germany	*Hal Lehrman*	418
A Group of Lincoln Books	*Edward N. Saveth*	424
Meine Kinder, by Lena Kuechler	*Marcia E. Allentuck*	427
Always the Young Strangers, by Carl Sandburg	*Isa Kapp*	429

Associate Editors
NATHAN GLAZER
CLEMENT GREENBERG
MARTIN GREENBERG
ROBERT WARSHOW

Editor
ELLIOT E. COHEN

Assistant Editor
SHERRY ABEL

Business Manager
FRANCES GREEN

Advertising
DOROTHY PUTNEY

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE
ALAN M. STROOCK, *Chairman*
CHARLES D. BREITEL, MAX ENGLER, ALBERT FURTH, MAURICE GLINERT, RALPH K. GUINZBURG, SYDNEY M. KAYE, ANNE W. LANGMAN, HILDA LEE, LOUIS M. RABINOWITZ, MARIE L. ROTHSCHILD, RALPH E. SAMUEL, DAVID SHER, JACK D. TARCHER, BEN TOUSTER, MILTON WEILL, IRA M. YOUNKER

COMMENTARY, incorporating *Contemporary Jewish Record:* Published monthly by the American Jewish Committee. 50c a copy; $5.00 a year; 2 years $8.00; 3 years, $10.00. Canadian and Foreign $1.00 a year additional. Offices, 34 West 33rd Street, New York 1. Re-entered as second class matter October 30, 1945 at the post office in New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1953, by the American Jewish Committee. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved by the publisher in the United States, Great Britain, Mexico, and all countries participating in the International Copyright Convention and the Pan-American Copyright Convention. Indexed in International Index to Periodicals, Magazine Subject Index, and Public Affairs Information Service.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

The American Tradition on Church and State *Oscar Handlin*

Within the ranks of both the Catholic and Protestant denominations voices are increasingly raised urging revision of the present institutional separation of things religious and secular in our society—and indeed questioning whether the "wall between church and state" is really basic American doctrine. Reviewing American experience, Oscar Handlin, Harvard historian, reasserts the soundness of the traditional view and its applicability to the present needs of our people.

Why There Are No Nazis in Berlin *Rainer Hildebrandt*

The author, a leader of the anti-Communist front in Berlin, tells how the momentum of the fight against one kind of totalitarianism sends West Berliners into action against the other kind, too. This strictly factual account shows them striking out sharply, quickly—and effectively—against every attempt to revive Hitlerism in their city.

Liberals on the Political Road Back *Robert Bendiner*

A report from Washington on how the Democrats, and in particular the liberals within the party, plan to conduct themselves so as to win back a majority of the American people.

Vienna Cemetery: 1952 *Robert Pick*

One who had to flee Vienna in 1938 returns to visit his family's plot in that city's Jewish cemetery, and notes many sad changes, not least the large number of reserved but unused plots – graves never dug because those destined for them died elsewhere.

A Jew by Any Name *Benzion C. Kaganoff*

The chequered course of Jewish naming practice down through the ages, as described by Rabbi Kaganoff, shows that we have been far readier, as a rule, to traffic with Gentiles in respect to first names than in matters of religion or ways of life. Every Jewish reader will feel himself involved in Rabbi Kaganoff's "dissertation."

A Voyage to Cyprus *A. A. Davidson*

In Cyprus, Turks, Greeks, British, and Jews all live in separate cultural centuries, from the Middle Ages to modern times.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY

OUR UNSPOKEN NATIONAL FAITH

Why Americans Need No Ideology

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

THE marvelous success and vitality of American institutions is equaled by the amazing poverty and inarticulateness of our theorizing about politics. No nation has ever believed more firmly that its political life was based on a perfect theory—and yet no nation has ever been less interested in political philosophy, or produced less in the way of a theory. To explain this paradox is to find a key to much that is characteristic—and much that is good—in our way of life. I believe that the two sides of the paradox explain each other. The very same facts which account for our belief that we actually possess a theory also explain why we have had little interest in political theories and have never bothered seriously to develop them.

In one sense, of course, everybody has a political theory, even if it is expressed only in hostility to theories. But this is a barren paradox, concealing more than it discovers. The essential fact is that we have always been more interested in *how our society works* than we have in its theoretical foundations. The unique history of the United States has offered us those benefits which come (in Edmund Burke's words) "from considering our liberties in the light of an inheritance" and has led us away from "extravagant and presumptuous speculations."

The great political theorists—men like Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau—even when not guilty of "extravagant and presumptuous speculations," have been primarily interested in discovering and systematizing general truths about society, regardless of time and place. However much they may have differed in other matters, they have all had in common an attempt to *abstract*, to separate *the universal principles* of all societies and governments from the peculiar circumstances of their own societies and governments. The United

---

IT IS considerably easier to say that we should spread knowledge of American ideals abroad than to define precisely just what "American ideals" are. Starting from this thought, DANIEL J. BOORSTIN here argues that while we are convinced we possess an American political philosophy, this conviction is largely an illusion: what we have at the core of our national conviction about America is something else—no less real for being hard to pin down in words. Mr. Boorstin attempts to give a general description of what this basic American belief is, and what its sources are. Much of this essay appears in somewhat different form as part of a book, *The Genius of American Politics*, which is to be published by the University of Chicago Press in May. Mr. Boorstin is the author of two other books: *The Mysterious Science of the Law*, and *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*. He is an associate professor at the University of Chicago, and a member of its Committee on Social Thought.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

States has never produced a political philosopher of their stature or a systematic theoretical work to rank with theirs.

The tendency to abstract the principles of political life may sharpen issues for the political philosopher. It becomes idolatry when it provides statesmen or a people with a blueprint for remaking their society. Especially in our own age (and at least since the French Revolution of 1789), more and more of the world has sought in social theory no mere rationale for institutions, but just such a blueprint. The characteristic tyrannies of our age—Nazism, Fascism, and Communism—have expressed precisely this idolatry. They justify their outrages because their "philosophies" require them. Recent European politics shows us men of all complexions seeking explicit ideological systems for society.

One of the many good fortunes of American civilization has been the happy coincidence of circumstances which has led us away from such idolatry. It is my belief that the circumstances which have stunted our interest in political philosophy have also nourished our refusal to make our society into the graven image of any man's political philosophy. In other ages this refusal might have seemed less significant; in ours it is a hallmark of a decent, free, and God-fearing society.

ANYONE who has recently been abroad and heard the sort of things we are telling the world knows they do not sound good. The portraits of American life are sometimes admirable—of the public library, the general store, and the volunteer fire department. But the statements of *what America believes* (and therefore what Europe would be better by believing) make the American abroad uncomfortable, if not downright embarrassed. They say something that is not American at all, even if they are sometimes expressed with the engaging brashness of a Fourth of July oration. What is the matter with these general statements is not any weakness in our institutions or any special stupidity in our publicity writers. Actually, they are bad because of the peculiarities—and even the advantages—of our geography, our history, and our way of life. The American experience is unique, and this dooms to failure any attempt to sum up our way of life in slogans and dogmas. This is why we have nothing in the line of a theory that can be exported to other peoples of the world.

At the heart of the matter lies a characteristically American belief for which I have invented the name "givenness." It is our way of taking for granted that an explicit political theory is superfluous for us precisely because we already somehow possess a satisfactory equivalent. "Givenness" is the belief that values in America are in some way or other automatically defined: *given* by certain facts of geography or history peculiar to us.

This conviction has three faces: first, we believe that we have received our values as a gift from the *past*; that the earliest settlers or Founding Fathers equipped our nation at its birth with a perfect and complete political theory adequate to all our future needs.

The second is the notion that in America we receive values as a gift from the *present*; that our theory is always implicit in our institutions. This is the idea that the American Way of Life harbors an American Way of Thought which can do us for a political theory, even if we never make it explicit, or never are in a position to confront ourselves with it.

The third part of "givenness" is a belief which links these first two. It is a belief in the *continuity* or homogeneity of our history. We see our national past as an uninterrupted continuum of similar events, so that our past merges indistinguishably into our present. This makes it easy for us to believe, at the same time, in the idea of a pre-formed original theory given to us by the Founding Fathers, and the idea of an implicit theory always offered us by our present experience. Our feeling of continuity in our history makes it easy for us to see the Founding Fathers as our contempories.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It induces us to draw heavily on the materials of our history, but always in a distinctly non-historical frame of mind.

I

THE dominating idea that our values are a gift from our past may be likened to the obsolete biological notion of "pre-formation." That is the idea that all parts of an organism pre-exist in perfect miniature in the seed. Biologists used to believe that if you could look at the seed of an apple under a strong enough microscope you would see in it a minute apple tree. Similarly, we seem to believe that if we could understand the ideas of the earliest settlers—the Pilgrim Fathers or Founding Fathers—we would find in them no mere 17th or 18th century philosophy of government, but the perfect embryo of the theory by which we now live. We believe, then, that the mature political ideals of the nation existed clearly conceived in the minds of our patriarchs.

What circumstances of American history have made such a view possible? The first is the obvious fact that, unlike Western European countries where the beginnings of civilization are shrouded in prehistoric mist, civilization in the United States stems from people who came to the American continent at a definite period in recent history. For American political thought this fact has had the greatest significance. We have not found it necessary to invent an Aeneas, for we have had our William Bradford and John Winthrop, or, looking to a later period, our Benjamin Franklin and James Madison. We have needed no Virgil to make a myth of the first settlement of our land or the first founding of the Republic; the crude facts of history have been good enough.

The facts of our history have thus made it easy for us to assume that our national life, as distinguished from that of the European peoples who trace their identity to a remote era, has had a clear purpose. Life in America—appropriately called "The American Experiment"—has again and again been described as the test or the proof of values supposed to have been clearly in the minds of the Founders. While the temper of much of our thought has been anti-historical, it is nevertheless true that we have leaned heavily on history to clarify our image of ourselves. Perhaps never before, except conceivably in the modern State of Israel, has a nation so firmly believed that it was founded on a full-blown theory; and hence that it might understand itself by recapturing a particular period in its past.

This idea is actually so familiar, so deeply embedded in our thinking, that we have never quite recognized it as a characteristic, much less a peculiarity, of our political thought. Nor have we become aware of its implications. "Fourscore and seven years ago," Lincoln said at Gettysburg in 1863, "our fathers brought forth on this continent, *a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.*" We have forgotten that these words are less the statement of a political theory than an affirmation that an adequate theory already existed in the first epoch of national life.

OUR determination to believe in a single logically complete theory as our heritage from the earliest settlers has actually kept us from grasping the *facts* of the early life of our nation. Strenuous efforts have been made to homogenize all the Fathers of our country. A great deal of the popular misunderstanding of the New England Puritans, for example, can be traced to this desire. Tradition teaches us to treat the history of our nation from 1620 to 1789 as a series of labor pains varying only in intensity. The Puritans, we are taught, came here for religious and political liberty; and the American Revolutionaries are supposed to have shown a Pilgrim-like fervor and clarity of purpose.

If we compare our point of view with that of the historically conscious peoples of Europe, we will begin to see some of its implications. The Europeans have, of course, had their interludes of nostalgia for some mythical heroic age, some Wagnerian *Götterdaemmerung*. Mussolini sought to reincar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nate the Roman Empire, Hitler to revive some prehistoric "Nordic" community. But such efforts in Europe have been spasmodic. Europeans have not with any continuity attributed to their nameless "earliest settlers" the mature ideals of their national life. In contrast, we have been consistently primitivistic.

Our belief in a perfectly pre-formed theory helps us understand many things about ourselves. In particular, it helps us see how it has been that, while we in the United States have been unfertile in political theories we have possessed an overweening sense of political orthodoxy. But in building an orthodoxy from what are in fact quite scanty early materials, we have of necessity left the penumbra of heresy vague. The inarticulate character of American political theory has thus actually facilitated heresy hunts and tended to make them indiscriminate. The heresy hunts which come at periods of national fear—the Alien and Sedition Acts of the age of the French Revolution, the Palmer Raids of the age of the Russian Revolution, and similar activities of more recent times—are directed not so much against acts of espionage, as against acts of irreverence toward that orthodox American creed supposed to have been born with the nation itself.

THE fact that we have had a written constitution, and even our special way of interpreting it, has contributed to the "preformation" notion. Changes in our policy or our institutions are read back into the ideas, and sometimes into the very words of the Founding Fathers. This has actually in one sense made of our federal Constitution an "unwritten document." What is more significant is the way in which we have justified the adaptation of the document to current needs: by attributing clarity, comprehensiveness, and a kind of mystical foresight to the social theory of the founders. In Great Britain, where there is an "unwritten" constitution in a very different sense, constitutional theory has taken for granted the *gradual* formulation of a theory of society. No sensible Briton would say that his history is the unfolding of the truths implicit in Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights. Such documents are seen as only single steps in a continuing process of definition.

The difference is expressed in the attitudes of the highest courts in the two countries. In Great Britain, the House of Lords has gradually come to the conclusion that it must be governed by its own earlier decisions. When the House of Lords decides a point of the constitution, it is thus frankly developing the constitution, and it must follow the line which it has previously taken, until the legislature marks out another. Not so in the United States. Our Supreme Court considers itself free to overrule its own earlier decisions, to discover, that is, that the Constitution which it is interpreting really has all along had a different meaning from that supposed.

The American view is actually closer to the British view during the Middle Ages, when the very idea of legislation was in its infancy, and when each generation believed that it could do little more than increase its knowledge of the customs which already existed. In the United States therefore we see the strange fact that the more flexible we have made our Constitution, the more rigid and unexperimental we have made our political theory. We are haunted by a fear that capricious changes in theory might imperil our institutions. This is our kind of conservatism.

Our theory of society is thus conceived as a kind of exoskeleton, like the shell of the lobster. We think of ourselves as growing *into* our skeleton, filling it out with the experience and resources of recent ages. But we always suppose that the outlines were rigidly drawn in the beginning. Our mission then is simply to demonstrate the truth—or rather the workability—of the original theory. This belief in a perfect original doctrine, one of the main qualities of which is practicability, may help us understand that unique combination of empiricism and idealism whch has characterized American political life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If we turn from our Constitution to our political parties we observe the same point of view. The authority of a particular past generation implies the impotence of later generations to reconstruct the theoretical bases of our national life. Today it is still taken for granted that the proper arena of controversy was marked off once and for all in the late 18th century: we are either Jeffersonians or Hamiltonians. In no other country has the hagiography of politics been more important. The lives of our national saints have remained vivid and contemporary for us. In no other country—except perhaps in Soviet Russia where people are called Marxists, Leninists, or Trotskyites—do statesmen so intimately embrace the image of early national heroes. Would an Englishman call himself a Walpolean or a Pittite? Yet in the United States the very names of our political parties—Republican and Democratic—are borrowed from the early age of our national life. This remarkable persistence of early labels offers the sharpest contrast with what we see in continental Western Europe. There new parties—and new party labels—come and go with the seasons, and most of the parties, with double- or triple-barreled names, draw on the novel vocabulary of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a commonplace that no fundamental theoretical difference separates our American political parties. What need has either party for an explicit political theory where both must be spokesmen of the *original* American doctrine on which the nation was founded?

The unique role which our national past has played in constructing our image of ourselves and our standards for American life has made us hypersensitive about our own history. Because we have searched it for the substance of a political philosophy, we have been inclined to exaggerate its contemporary relevance. When Charles A. Beard, in his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution,* in 1913, showed that members of the Constitutional Convention had a financial interest in the establishment of a stable federal government, he scandalized respectable scholars. Leaders of opinion, like Nicholas Murray Butler, thought the book a wholesale attack on the American creed. The explosive import of such a book would have been impossible had not the facts of political history already been elevated into an axiom of political philosophy. Any innuendo against the motives of the Founding Fathers was therefore seen as an implied attack on the American way of life. The British have never been so disturbed by the suggestion that the barons had a personal interest in extracting from King John the concessions written into Magna Charta.

During the 1930's, when the Communist party made a serious effort to appear a native American growth, it too sought to reinterpret the American past, and argued that the American Revolution had really been a class war and not merely a colonial rebellion. The radical attack on that doctrine of judicial review which then seemed to obstruct change in our institutions was made by way of a labored two-volume historical treatise, Louis Boudin's *Government by Judiciary.* He sought to prove that the Founding Fathers had never intended the Supreme Court to have the power to declare federal laws unconstitutional.

The lives of our great men have played a peculiarly large role in our attempt at self-definition. Some of our best historical talent has in recent years gone into biography: Beveridge's *Marshall,* Van Doren's *Franklin,* Malone's *Jefferson,* and Freeman's *Washington.* We have also the long filial tradition of Sparks's or Weems's or Marshall's *Washington,* or Wirt's *Patrick Henry.* For us, biographies have taken on a special importance precisely because we have had so little dogmatic writing. And our national history thus has a primary significance for Americans which is without parallel in modern nations. The quest for the meaning of our political life has been carried on through historical rather than philosophical channels.

It is not surprising then, that much of our self-criticism has taken the form of historical reinterpretation. In periods of disillusionment we have expressed ourselves not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so much in new philosophies, in dogmas of dictatorship or existentialism, as in earnest, if sometimes tortured, reinterpretations of the American past. In the 1920's and 30's, for example, people who would not have looked twice at a revolutionary political theory, or a nihilist metaphysic, read eagerly W. E. Woodward's *New American History,* James Truslow Adams' *Founding of New England,* Edgar Lee Masters' *Lincoln,* or the numerous other iconoclastic works on Washington or Grant. The sharpest criticisms of contemporary America were the works of Sinclair Lewis and H. L. Mencken, which were hardly theoretical.

THE mystic rigidity of our "pre-formation" theory has not, however, militated against great flexibility in dealing with practical problems. Confident that the wisdom of the Founding Fathers somehow made provision for all future emergencies, we have not felt bound to limit our experiments to those which we could justify with theories in advance. In the last century or so, whenever the citizens of continental Western Europe have found themselves in desperate circumstances, they have had to choose among political parties each of which was committed to a particular theoretical foundation for its whole program—"monarchist"—"liberal"—"Catholic"—"socialist"—"fascist"—or "Communist." This has not been the case in the United States. Not even during the Civil War: historians still argue over what, if any, political theory Lincoln represented. In the crisis which followed the Great Depression, when Franklin D. Roosevelt announced his program for saving the American economy, he did not promise to implement a theory. Rather he declared frankly that he would try one thing after another and would keep trying until a cure was found. "The country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: if it fails, admit it frankly and try another." Neither he nor his listeners doubted that whatever solution, within the limits of common-law liberties, might prove successful would also prove to have been within the prevision of the Founding Fathers. The people balked only when a proposal—like the Court-packing plan—seemed to imperil the independence of the judiciary, an ancient principle of the common law.

On second thought it is not surprising that we who have been surest of the basic structure of our political life should also have been most prodigal of legislation. Two remarkable and complementary facts are that the amendments to our federal Constitution have been so few (only twelve in addition to the first ten, or Bill of Rights) during the last century and a half, and that at the same time our legal experiments have been so numerous. For us it is enough to recommend a piece of legislation if a considerable number of people want it, if there is no loud opposition, and if there seems a reasonable chance that it might reduce some present evil. Our laws have been abundant and ephemeral as the flies of summer. Conservatism about our basic institutions, and the faith that they will be vindicated in the national experience, have made us less fearful of minor legislation.

Our mystic belief in the "pre-formed" national theory has thus restrained theoretical vagaries without preventing particular experiments. While not having ever intended it, we have thus stumbled on an evolutionary approach to institutions. Yet at the same time we have taken up a kind of social Freudianism. For the "pre-formation" concept of values implies the belief that the childhood years of a nation's history are crucial for the formation of its character. More than that, we have given the national past a peculiarly normative significance. Small wonder that we should seem complacent if we judge ourselves by whether we are true to our own character. Our American past, and the theories of politics which it is thought to imply, have become the yardstick against which national life is measured. This is the deeper meaning of that popular criterion of "Americanism" which is so familiar in the United States and sounds so strange to European ears.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II

But, at the same time that we Americans believe that our values and our theory are a gift of a particular period in the past, we also believe that our values and our theory are the gift of the present: not of any particular men in the 17th and 18th century, but of the peculiarly fortunate conditions of life in America.

This second axiom is also an excuse, or a reason, for not philosophizing. If it is, in strict logic, contradictory to the first, from the point of view of the individual believer it is actually complementary. For while the first axiom is ideal and static in its emphasis, the second is practical and dynamic. "Preformation" means that the theory of community was given once and for all in the beginning: but this second sense of "givenness" means that the theory of community is perpetually being given and ever anew.

Taken together with the idea of preformation, this second sense of "givenness" makes an amazingly comprehensive set of attitudes. The American is thus prepared to find in *all* experience, in his history and his geography, in his past and his present, proof for his conviction that he is equipped with a hierarchy of values, a political theory. Both axioms together encourage us to think that we need not invent a political theory because we already possess one.

This second face of "givenness" is at once much simpler and much more vague than the aspect of pre-formation. It is simply the notion that values are implicit in the American experience. The idea that the American landscape is a giver of values is, of course, old and familiar. It has long been believed that in America the community's values would not have to be sought from books, traditions, the messianic vision of prophets, or the speculative schemes of philosophers, but would somehow be the gift of the continent itself.

We Americans have always been much impressed by the simple fact that we are children of a Brave New World. Even from the earliest settlements, but especially since the formative era of the late 18th and early 19th century, we have looked upon ourselves as the lucky beneficiaries of an especially happy environment. In the pamphlets which Puritans wrote in the 17th century to attract their brethren to New England, we read fantastic tales of the abundance of crops and game, the magic of the air and water, how life on the new continent cured consumption, gout, and all sorts of fevers, how the old became young, the young became vigorous, and barren women suddenly bore children. In the very same pamphlets we can read how the wilderness would toughen the effete, and how the wealth of this unexploited paradise would enrich the impoverished.

The myth was no less alive two centuries later, when Paul Bunyan, the giant woodsman of the forest frontier (as James Stevens describes him), ". . . felt amazed beyond words that the simple fact of entering Real America and becoming a Real American could make him feel so exalted, so pure, so noble, so good. And an indomitable conquering spirit had come to him also. He now felt that he could whip his weight in wildcats, that he could pull the clouds out of the sky, or chew up stones, or tell the whole world anything." We have been told again and again, with the metaphorical precision of poetry, that the United States is the *land* of the free. Independence, equality, and liberty, we like to believe, are breathed in with our very air. No nation has been readier to identify its values with the peculiar conditions of its landscape: we believe in *American* equality, *American* liberty, *American* democracy, or, in sum, the *American* way of life.

Our belief in the mystical power of our land in this roundabout way has nourished a naturalistic point of view; and a naturalistic approach to values has thus, in the United States, been bound up with patriotism itself. What the Europeans have seen as the gift of the past, Americans have seen as the gift of the present. What the European thinks he must learn from books, museums, and churches, from his culture and its monuments, the American thinks he can get from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contemporary life, from seizing peculiarly American opportunities.

It is surely no accident that the most influential, if not the only significant general interpretation of our history has been that of Frederick Jackson Turner. He found the special virtues of our institutions and of our national character in the uniquely recurrent conditions of our frontier. Turner thus translated Paul Bunyan into the language of sociology:

> Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet changing conditions. . . . All peoples show development. . . . But in the case of the United States we have a different phenomenon. . . . This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. . . .
>
> The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness, that practical inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier, or called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier.

But how can we explain the origin, growth, and vitality of this idea of "givenness" in America? The most obvious and some of the most important explanations have escaped us for their very obviousness; to become aware of them it may be necessary to go to Europe, where some of us begin to discover America.

One fact which becomes increasingly difficult to communicate to the urban American, but which the automobile and our national parks have kept alive for some of us, is the remarkable grandeur of the American continent. Even for the early Puritan settlers the forest which hid savage arrows had a fascination. The magic of the land is a leitmotif throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. We hear it, for example, in Jefferson's ecstatic description of the confluence of the Potomac and the Shenandoah Rivers; in Lewis and Clark's account of the Far West; in the vivid pages of Francis Parkman's *Oregon Trail*, and in a thousand other places. It is echoed in the numberless travel books and diaries of those men and women who left the comfortable and dingy metropolises of the Atlantic seaboard to explore the Rocky Mountains, the prairies, or the deserts. Their simple emotions should not be underestimated, nor should we interpret them with too much subtlety. It is misleading to associate too closely the appeal of virgin America with the bookish romanticism of European belles-lettres. The unspoiled grandeur of America helped men believe that here the Giver of values spoke to man more directly—in the language of experience rather than in that of books or monuments.

Our immigrant character has encouraged this point of view. The United States has, of course, been peopled at widely distant times and for the most diverse reasons. Some came because they were Protestants, others because they were Catholics, still others because they were Jews; some because they were monarchists, others because they were opposed to monarchy. We have been too well aware of this diversity to try to seek our common values in our original cultures. It is true that we have developed a kind of generalized untheological Christianity, which is probably what we mean by the "In God We Trust" on our coins. We have looked anxiously for some common faith. A few writers, like Louis Adamic, have even tried to make the motleyness itself a scheme of values: to make the patchwork seem the pattern. But the readiest solution, a necessary solution, perhaps the only possible solution for us, has been to assume, in the immigrant's own phrase, that ours is a "golden land," that values spring from our common ground. If American ideals are not in books or in the blood, but in the air, then they are readily acquired; actually it is almost impossible for an immigrant to avoid

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acquiring them. He is not required to learn a philosophy so much as to rid his lungs of the air of Europe.

The very commonness of American values has seemed their proof: they have come directly from the hand of God and from the soil of the continent. This attitude helps explain why the martyr (at least the *secular* martyr) has not been attractive to us. In the accurate words of our popular song, "The Best Things in Life Are Free." Men in America have had to struggle against nature, against wild Indians, high mountains, arid deserts, against space itself. But these struggles have seemed required to make the continent livable or comfortable, not to make our society good. In Europe, on the other hand, the liberal could not make the plant of liberty grow without first cutting out the weeds of tyranny; and he took that for his task. But the American has preened himself on his good sense in making *his* home where liberty is the natural growth. Voltaire declared, "Where liberty is not, there is my home." This was a fitting and thoroughly un-American reply to Franklin's "Where liberty dwells, there is my country."

The character of our national heroes bears witness to our belief in "givenness," our preference for the man who seizes his God-given opportunities over him who pursues a great private vision. Perhaps never before has there been such a thorough identification of normality and virtue. A "red-blooded" American must be a virtuous American; and nearly all our national heroes have been red-blooded, outdoor types who might have made the varsity team. Our ideal is at the opposite pole from that of a German superman or an irredentist agitator in his garret. We admire not the monstrous but the normal, not the herald of a new age but the embodiment of his own. In the language of John Dewey, he is the well-adjusted man; in the language of Arthur Miller's salesman, Willy Loman, he is the man who is not merely liked but *well* liked. Our national heroes have not been erratic geniuses like Michelangelo or Cromwell or Napoleon but rather men like Washington and Jackson and Lincoln, who possessed the commonplace virtues to an extraordinary degree.

III

The third aspect of the idea of "givenness" helps us understand how we can at once appeal to the past and the present, and find no contradiction in doing so.

By this I mean the remarkable continuity or homogeneity of American history. To grasp it, we must at the outset discard a European cliché about us, namely that ours is a land without continuity or tradition, while in Europe man feels close to his ancestors. The truth of the matter is that anyone who goes to Europe nowadays cannot fail to be impressed with the amazing, the unique continuity of American history, and, in contrast, the *dis*continuity of European history.

This is true in several senses. In the first place, there is the obvious fact that the recent history of Europe has seen violent oscillations of regime. Each new regime has taken on itself a task of historical amnesia: the fascists trying to deny their democratic past, the democrats trying to deny their fascist past, etc. But there is a subtler way in which the landscape and monuments which surround the European tend to impress on him the various possibilities of life in his country; while what the American sees confirms his sense of "givenness," his belief in the normality, if not the inevitability, of the particular institutions which he has evolved. "For the American tourist," Aldous Huxley has shrewdly observed, "the greatest charm of foreign travel is the very high ratio of European history to European geography. Conversely, for the European, who has come to feel the oppressive weight of a doubtless splendid, but often fatal past, the greatest charm of travel in the New World is the high ratio of its geography to its history."

Let me explain. I have recently been abroad, where I spent the better part of a year in Italy. My impressions there sharpened that contrast which I have been describing between the American and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

European image of the past. The first church I visited was the Capella Palatina in Palermo, where Christian mosaics of the 12th century are surmounted by a ceiling of Moslem craftsmanship. Throughout Sicily one comes upon pagan temples on the foundations of which rose churches which in the Middle Ages were transformed into mosques, and which later again were used as Christian chapels.

The capitals of Europe are rich in evidence of the unpredictability of human history. Of all cities in the world, Rome is perhaps richest in such evidence: the retaining walls which early Romans built to protect the road up to the Palatine are made of fragments taken from Greek and North African temples; columns standing in the Forum bear witness not only to ancient Roman skill but also to the shattered schemes of the conquered peoples from whom they were taken. The fate the Romans brought upon their predecessors was afterwards, of course, visited upon Rome herself by the barbarians and Christians who made the Forum into their stone quarry. The Colosseum where Christians and Jews were once slaughtered to amuse the mob is now divided by partitions which later Christians erected to support the stage of their Passion Play. Its walls are pocked by holes from which barbarian and Christian soldiers extracted iron for their weapons in the Middle Ages; large segments were removed by popes to add splendor to their churches. The magnificent roads which Julius Caesar built for his legions are traveled by little automobiles which, with appropriate irony, borrow their name from "Mickey Mouse"—in Italian, "Topolino."

In Europe one need not be an archaeologist or a philosopher to see that over the centuries many different kinds of life are possible in the same place and for the same people. Who can decide which, if any of these, is "normal" for Italy? It is hardly surprising, then, that the people of Europe have not found it easy to believe that their values are given by their landscape. They look to ideology to help them choose among alternatives.

In the United States, of course, we see no Colosseum, no Capella Palatina, no ancient roads. The effect of this simple fact on our aesthetic sense, though much talked of, is probably less significant than on our sense of history and our approach to values. We see very few monuments to the uncertainties, the motley possibilities of history, or for that matter to the rise and fall of grand theories of society. Our main public buildings were erected for much the same purpose for which they are now being used. The Congress of the United States is still housed in the first building expressly constructed for that purpose. Although the White House, like the Capitol, was gutted by fire during the War of 1812, it, too, was soon rebuilt on the same spot; in 1952 another restoration was completed. Our rural landscape, with a few scattered exceptions—the decayed plantation mansions of the South, the manor houses of upstate New York, and the missions of Florida and California—teaches us very little of the fortunes of history. Even our archaeology is republican, designed to make the past contemporary; you can spend a vacation at Colonial Williamsburg.

The impression which the American has as he looks about him is thus one of the inevitability of the particular institutions, the particular kind of society in which he lives. The kind of acceptance of institutions as proper to their time and place which tyrants have labored in vain to produce, has in the United States been the result of the accidents of history. The limitations of our history have perhaps confined our philosophical imagination; but they have at the same time confirmed our sense of the continuity of our past, and made the definitions of philosophers seem less urgent. We Americans are reared with a feeling for the unity of our history, and an unprecedented belief in the normality of our kind of life to our place on earth.

During these last one hundred and seventy-five years the history of the United States has thus had a unity and coherence unknown in Europe. Many factors—our geographical isolation, our special opportunities

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for expansion and exploitation within our own borders, and our remoteness from Europe—have of course contributed. Even our American Civil War, which shook us deeply, and was one of the bloodiest wars anywhere in the century, can be understood with scant reference to the ideologies then sweeping Europe: to the intellectual background of 1848, of the Risorgimento, of the Paris Commune. It was not properly a counterpart of European struggles of the period, or really an exception to the domestic continuity of our history.

But, whatever the causes, the winds of dogma and the gusts of revolution which during the last century and a half have blown violently over Western Europe, making France, Italy, Germany, and now perhaps even England, testing grounds for panaceas, have not ruffled our intellectual climate. The United States, with a kind of obstinate provincialism, has enjoyed relatively calm weather. While European politics became a kaleidoscope, political life in the United States has seemed to remain a window through which we can look at the life envisaged by our patriarchs. The hills and valleys of European history in the 19th century have had no real counterpart in the history of the United States. Because our road has been relatively smooth, we have easily believed that we have trod no historical road at all. We seem the direct beneficiaries of our climate, our soil, and our mineral wealth.

For the first time in modern history, and to an extent not true even in the age of the French Revolution, Europe has become the noisy champion of man's power to make over his culture at will. People all over Europe have become accustomed, during the last century, to the notion that man can better his condition by trying to remake his institutions in some colossal image. Fascism and Nazism proposed this; and so does Communism. Europe has not yet realized that the remedy it seeks is itself a disease.

In contrast with this, our geography and history have led us to an unspoken assumption, an axiom so basic to our thinking that we have hardly been aware of it at all. This is the axiom that institutions are not and should not be the grand creations of men toward large ends and outspoken values; rather they are organisms which grow out of the soil in which they are rooted and out of the tradition from which they have sprung.

Our history has fitted us, even against our will, to understand the meaning of conservatism. We have become the exemplars of the continuity of history and of the fruits which came from cultivating institutions suited to a time and place, in continuity with the past.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE COLD WAR PERSPECTIVE WITHOUT STALIN

Why Soviet Expansion May Now Accelerate

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

LONDON

STALIN'S disappearance from the scene he has so long dominated is the kind of event to which the term "end of an epoch" can be applied without overmuch exaggeration, and that for reasons which have nothing to do with his alleged status as Lenin's successor in the realm of Communist theory and practice. The real reason why this event must be treated with extreme seriousness is that it comes at a time when the Soviet regime is both able and apparently willing to extend its bid for world domination.

Unlike other dictators of recent years, Stalin died in his bed. The fact may not seem very significant to those who think of Stalinism as merely the Russian version of modern totalitarian tyranny, forgetting that it has achieved the kind of stability and permanence-in-revolution which eluded its rivals. Hitler was a madman, and Mussolini a clown; that, too, is less important than the rapid crumbling of their respective systems of rule. Fascism has not stood the test of modern war. Stalinism has. The Third Reich was a bloody intermezzo in modern German history: horrible and destructive, but also grotesque and even (if one can permit oneself the thought) bordering on the farcical. It was never taken seriously by intelligent Germans, but intelligent Russians take the Soviet regime seriously. They have to; it has become part of the Russian heritage.

THE ease with which the succession was arranged, within a few hours of the dictator's death, is proof of a kind of bureaucratic stability, a stability which Hitler's crazy regime never attained. The balance between party, army, secret police, and economic bureaucracy has been preserved, with the party formally in complete control of everything, and actually a step ahead of the others. That is the meaning of Malenkov's elevation to the premiership, above Beria, Molotov, Bulganin, and the rest. Last October the reshuffle of the party directorate left Stalin and Malenkov as the only two leaders who were members both of the Secretariat and the inner ring of administrators—the effective "inner cabinet" within the Council of Ministers. Now the latter body has been streamlined and contracted, and Malenkov has officially taken Stalin's place as chairman. At the same time the party presidium has been sharply reduced in size; the technocrats whom Stalin introduced into the inner circle last autumn, as a counterweight to the party bosses, are once again, with one or two exceptions, relegated to purely administrative functions. Thus the party's grip is tightened in both di-

---

ON MARCH 5, 1953 there passed away one of the cruelest of all tyrants: "genius" of world Communism, and chief designer and engineer of the most efficient terror system mankind has ever suffered under, Joseph Stalin was consigned to the immortality of the party embalmers, chemical and historical. But did his death weaken the system he had founded? Unlike Hitler and Mussolini, Stalin died in bed—as GEORGE LICHTHEIM here points out, and he marshals some of the various considerations that speak for a stability in Red totalitarianism that its Brown and Black counterparts were unable to achieve. Moreover, if we take fact rather than hope as our guide, this observer warns us, Stalin's death would seem to have removed few of the problems besetting the world since 1946; and indeed, in the hands of his successors, we may find the pressure of the Communist push against the rest of the world increasing. Mr. Lichtheim is a British writer who contributes often to COMMENTARY. His most recent article, "Will Soviet Anti-Semitism Teach the Lesson?" appeared in last month's issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rections, and the effective controllers of the country's destiny are more narrowly defined. A sign of weakness? Perhaps, but for the time being a sign that the Stalinist system is in operation—without Stalin, and therefore with fewer possibilities of one group's being maneuvered against the other, but still in operation.

Ever since last October's 19th Congress of the Soviet Communist party it has become increasingly obvious that Stalin was, as it were, making his testament and arranging for the succession. Even his last "theoretical" pronouncement, the long article in *Bolshevik* published on the eve of the congress and miscalled "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR," had the character of a testament addressed to the country's rulers: the party bureaucrats and the administrators of the state economy. For in the guise of a curiously scholastic discussion of Communist theory it contained an implied justification of the party's preeminent role in the Soviet planning system and Soviet life generally, and laid down the broad lines along which Soviet policy can be expected to proceed over the next few years.

If Stalin is destined to go down in history as the man who transformed the Communist party into an instrument of state planning and state despotism, it is likely that his last formal pronouncement will rank high among the documents of the totalitarian age. For in it he has managed to define "socialism" in a manner which justifies the permanence of the despotic "revolution from above" that is the essence of the Soviet system; and he has done so at a moment when the Soviet Union is engaged upon an arms race which further distorts the industrial structure and emphasizes the preeminence of heavy industry at the expense of the consumer. Moreover, he has left behind a governmental structure in which the planners, the soldiers, the policemen, and the party leaders are carefully balanced—but with the party in the central position of control. This central control exercised by the party over all the rest is the essence of Stalinism, and of the "permanent revolution" which has now been going on for thirty-five years.

Last October's congress was called together, partly in order to pass in general review the problems facing the regime at home and to explain to the six million members of the Communist party why there can be no immediate rise in living standards; partly to map out a long-term foreign policy, and indeed the entire perspective, for perhaps as much as a generation ahead. The "theoretical" basis had been laid with Stalin's article in *Bolshevik,* which stressed the dissolution of the world market as the result of the Second World War, and the likelihood of ever sharpening capitalist crises owing to the steady shrinkage of the non-Soviet world. From this, Stalin deduced the certainty of worsening relations between the "capitalist" states: as the general crisis of capitalism accelerates, the rival states try to obtain the largest possible slice of the diminishing cake, and in the process they inevitably collide. Hence the certainty that at some point Britain and France will try to break out of the Atlantic system—if only because American policy favors Germany and Japan at their expense. And hence also the inevitability of wars between the "imperialists."

The question is how far this kind of doctrinaire restatement of primitive Leninism is really taken seriously by the new party hierarchy. During the sittings of the congress it was remarked that though Malenkov and Beria dutifully repeated Stalin's prediction about the certainty of inter-imperialist rivalries and wars, they did so in a somewhat perfunctory manner, while most of the other speakers had hardly anything to say about it. It was left to Stalin to make a brief valedictory address to the assembled delegates of foreign Communist parties in which he exhorted them to rally their respective countries against the threat of American overlordship. This was the only attempt made at the congress to link internal and external policy. Stalin's wait-and-see attitude, for which his long theoretical exegesis provided the justification, did not of course amount to saying that the Soviet empire

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was immune to foreign threats; but it did seem to imply that a long-term program of internal development was possible and realistic, and could be sufficiently flexible to allow for its extension to any country on the Soviet periphery where conditions might favor a Communist seizure of power. As for the possibility of foreign attack, he came close to brushing it off on the ground that war against the Soviet Union was too dangerous a game for foreign powers to risk:

> It is said that the contradictions between capitalism and socialism are stronger than the contradictions between the capitalist countries. Theoretically, of course, that is true. It is not only true now, today; it was true before the Second World War. And it was more or less realized by the leaders of the capitalist countries. Yet the Second World War began not as a war with the USSR, but as a war between capitalist countries. Why? Firstly, because war with the USSR, as a socialist land, is more dangerous to capitalism than war between capitalist countries; for whereas war between capitalist countries puts in question only the supremacy of certain capitalist countries over others, war with the USSR must certainly put in question the existence of capitalism itself. Secondly, because the capitalists, although they clamor for propaganda purposes about the aggressiveness of the Soviet Union, do not themselves believe that it is aggressive, because they are aware of the Soviet Union's peaceful policy and know it will not itself attack capitalist countries.

This passage has been much quoted and generally treated as an exercise in semantics, or as a crude piece of psychological warfare. But Stalin was writing his article mainly for home consumption, and he clearly meant it to be regarded as his political testament. In the context in which the above words appear, they give the impression of being addressed to the party rather than to the outside world. Taken together with the confident prediction of capitalist crises "on a narrowing basis," owing to the shrinkage of the world market, and of inter-imperialist wars, *Stalin's testament amounts to a prescription for a long-term policy of continuing the cold war by all means, taking advantage of all local opportunities to seize power, but avoiding preventive wars.* And if the capitalist world cannot unite against the Soviet empire, and is afraid to attack it, a preventive war on its part becomes less and less likely.

On a purely rational calculation this is probably the safest policy for Stalin's successors to follow, though not necessarily for the crude and superficial "theoretical" reasons outlined in his article. It is, however, somewhat unlikely that they will in fact take his advice. The party congress provided no direct evidence either way, although, as already remarked, the other speakers treated Stalin's pronouncements on this subject with a ritualistic brevity which suggested a certain skepticism. It is more than likely that they thought him somewhat old-fashioned for attaching so much importance to the existence of inter-imperialist rivalries. In these matters one is reduced to guesswork, but the delicate balance between state and party can only be preserved by an individual dictator with unusual control over his environment, and with a certain conservative attachment to party dogma. As a theorist, Stalin has always been remarkable for his extreme conservatism and his reliance on past experience. In the above passage he explicitly based himself on the experience of the years leading up to the Second World War. It is at least not an unreasonable conjecture that this viewpoint is now regarded in the Kremlin as somewhat old-fashioned. This does not mean that the cautious wait-and-see policy is to be shelved, but *the likelihood of its being abandoned in some grave international crisis has probably increased somewhat.* The enlarged role allotted to the military among the top policy-planners—signified by Zhukov's return to the limelight and even by the decorative post bestowed upon the aged Voroshilov—should work in the same direction.

In these matters the personal factor cannot be disregarded, for in the end the decision will be made by a few men. Most of them have long been in commanding positions, but their relations towards each other are no longer quite the same. One thing is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

already obvious: the Soviet Union is for the moment being governed by a committee rather than by a single dictator. In order to carry through his lightning reorganization of the government after Stalin's death, and to preserve his place at the very top, Malenkov had to compromise with some of the other aspirants to power. The merging of ministries and party offices, the appointment of Beria, Bulganin, Kaganovich, and Mikoyan to "overlordships" over entire groups of amalgamated ministries, the elevation of Voroshilov to the presidency instead of the colorless Shvernik, the promotion of Zhukov —the true representative of the officers' corps—to a post of political importance—all these are signs that relations within the hierarchy are fluid. Presumably one group has entrenched itself at the expense of others. Some observers have even spoken of a silent *coup d'état* which may have deliberately flouted Stalin's wishes, and perhaps Molotov's too. However that may be, there is now no single personality strong enough to control all the others; and these others include men like Beria and Bulganin whose departmental concern with the safety of the Soviet Union may easily outweigh their reliance on Stalin's prediction as to what is likely to happen ten years hence. Military planners are cautious and realistic by profession, and we have no reason to regard the first actions and statements of the new regime as proof that an adventurous policy is in the making; on the contrary, the emphasis for the moment is all on peace. That was to be expected, but it does not mean much. Uncertainty has grown, and with it fear. *The wait-and-see policy was Stalin's last gift to the party; it may turn out that someone like Stalin is required to carry it through.*

WHAT the new system clearly lacks at present is the quasi-national character which the last war conferred upon Stalin's personal dictatorship. It must for some time live upon the prestige the regime acquired by winning the war. But given time it may hope to obtain a more solid standing by achievements of its own. The probable direction it will choose is not hard to guess, and in any case it emerged clearly from Malenkov's long and dreary address to last October's party congress: the Soviet public is to be presented with an "unparalleled" success in the carrying out of the current Five Year Plan, with a general streamlining and overhauling of the cumbersome administration, and with a modest rise in living standards. Before he rose to the top, Malenkov made his mark as an efficiency expert. Efficiency, too, is the party's weak point in the eyes of the planning bureaucracy, whose leaders were promoted last October and have now once more been excluded from the inner circle. The party is on trial in their eyes, and presumably Malenkov knows it. Its monopoly of information-*cum*-interpretation in everything that regards the outside world has yet to meet the critical test of a conflict with America; meantime it must show that it can administer Russia's bulging economy. To keep control, its leaders must beat the planners at their own game, while maintaining public confidence in the long deferred improvement of living standards. Stalin's great achievement was to get the industrial revolution under way, at the expense of the masses, while keeping the party under control and turning it into an effective instrument of his kind of "socialism." If the party is to stay in power it must go on running the permanent revolution he started: the revolution which consists in forcing Soviet society into the mold prescribed by the plan.

THE Soviet Union is now in the middle of its Fifth Five Year Plan, the second since the war. The Fourth Plan (1946-50) was apparently successful in restoring agricultural production to the 1940 level and raising the total national income slightly above that level. The object of the present plan is more ambitious: it is intended that by 1956 the national income shall be some 60 per cent above pre-war, industry alone rising by about 70 per cent and agriculture by 40-50 per cent. And since the massive expansion of the labor force achieved in 1946-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

50 has now come to an end, the program depends on higher productivity from unchanged resources. If "Malenkovism" stands for anything in particular, it stands for this. One might say that it represents greater emphasis on intensification of the labor process, as distinct from the crude "extensive" methods applied under Stalin (as under early capitalism in the West). Not that forced labor is likely to disappear, but given time it may become slightly less important. Time, however, is just what the regime lacks. It is conducting an armament race, and any major letup is out of the question.

Efforts are nonetheless being made to raise productivity by 50 per cent during the current plan period, and though this aim is not likely to be achieved, some progress is being made: partly by new investment, partly by increased technical education, and partly by a general improvement in industrial organization. This process has been going on since the war, has recently been speeded up, and is best calculated to provide the new regime with the prestige it lacks at the moment. In personal terms one might say that *the new men must try to sell themselves to the masses as modern-minded, efficient, and fast-moving disciples of the aged tyrant they have succeeded.* In economic terms, crude exploitation of additional labor reserves is probably at an end anyhow, and the emphasis must lie on quality and better education.

The success of these methods must largely turn on the availability of additional sources of motive power. Oil production is supposed to go up by 85 per cent; the planned level is now 70 million tons in 1955. This is the first time that oil production is being expanded at a greater rate than coal; the coal supply is intended to be 43 per cent higher in 1955. At the same time generating capacity for electricity is to rise by 80 per cent. Output of heavy industry and building will continue to increase more rapidly than that of light industry or agriculture, and the combined share of investment and defense in the national budget will also continue to rise. These broad lines of economic policy were laid down in 1950, received their "theoretical" justification in Stalin's pamphlet last October (which chided Communist ideologists for ignoring economic facts), and will certainly be continued under Malenkov. If successful, the plan should by 1956 have produced the following results, which may usefully be compared with the corresponding figures for Western Europe (i.e., the six EDC countries and Britain), for the year 1951:

	Soviet Union 1956 est.	*Western Europe* 1951
Coal and lignite output (million tons)	372	530
Electricity generation (billion kwh)	163	196
Oil consumption (million tons)	70	56
Crude steel (million tons)	44	51
Cement output (million tons)	23	41

Between now and 1956 there will be some further progress in Western Europe, but probably not much. Anyone is free to feel reassured by these figures, but Europeans remember that Hitler started his war, and almost won it, on much less than Malenkov has at his disposal even now. It is true that he did not have the United States to reckon with, or thought he did not. It is also true that he was a madman, and that Malenkov presumably is not. Given these two additional factors, the world can probably look forward to some years of "peace" —until the balance changes decisively in Russia's favor, or alternatively until the feeling gains ground in the Kremlin that time is no longer working for Russia and that it is now or never. In either event, the regime must try to justify itself in the eyes of the new Soviet hierarchy, including the marshals who won the last war. And it must do so in conformity with the Stalinist tradition. It is not a pleasant prospect.

It is well, for this reason, to back away somewhat from the most recent events and look afresh at the cold war, as it presents itself in the light of basic Soviet doctrine, as well as official American doctrine. Of the latter, one can only say—speaking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from here—that it seems to have changed much less than Republican campaign oratory might have led one to expect. The emphasis is still very much on caution, so that there has been little advance beyond the policy of "containment"; and the inescapability of military stalemate in Asia appears to have dawned on the central figures in the new administration—or so it would seem. What dynamism there is, is confined to Europe: as, in the European view, it should be. For the first rule of European thinking (Professor Toynbee's inflated reputation notwithstanding) is still that Europe remains the world's center of gravity, as well as the only area where the cold war can genuinely be won or lost. The partition of Korea can endure; that of Germany cannot, because it involves the partition of Europe and therefore an irreconcilable clash of cultures in the heart of one of the world's great industrial areas. This is not to say that German unification can shortly be brought about; it probably cannot.

In either case, however, the precarious equilibrium in the center of the Continent sets up tensions which may explode at any time. It is immaterial whether there was anything in the persistent rumor, before he died, that "Gottwald was getting ready to jump off the train"; it is even less material whether there is truth in the assertion that the entire Hungarian politbureau is to be "purged," or that the other satellites may shortly attack Yugoslavia. The point is that such events are entirely possible, and that each affects one of the world's neuralgic spots. The balance of power being what it is, an event such as the defection of the Prague regime from the Soviet bloc would be almost certain to set off the biggest detonation of all time; yet such an event is perfectly possible and could take place tomorrow if there should be an internal convulsion in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Compare this with the vast quagmire of Asia, where war over vast areas, and the destruction of millions, could conceivably go on for years without seriously altering the world balance of forces and without obliging either of the Big Two to make use of the "ultimate weapon." If this analysis is correct, it follows that the internal dynamic of the Soviet regime is of vastly greater consequence for the world than any geopolitical contest in or around China. For it is this dynamic which will determine the behavior of the ruling group—now narrowed down to a mere handful of people—in any one of a dozen hypothetical emergencies affecting the unstable equilibrium of world forces at five or six critical points.

In this respect the present situation is much closer to that in Europe before 1914 than to the pre-1939 line-up, when there was a simple choice between stopping and not stopping Hitler in his tracks before he could start a general war. Today there is no such choice, and that is why the fashionable talk about "remembering the lessons of Munich" is so completely beside the point. There are no worthwhile lessons to be extracted from that experience, for the Soviet Union is much too vast to be placed in a straitjacket and rendered harmless by the Atlantic powers, as Germany, Italy, and Japan could perhaps have been rendered harmless if joint action had been taken in time. An uneasy equilibrium between two giant powers and their allies and satellites is a situation of a totally different sort, for then it depends on the internal dynamic of the two competing systems what the issue is to be. We know the nature of the American and Atlantic dynamic. What is the nature of the Soviet dynamic?

It is here that one is brought back to the seemingly far-fetched and abstract considerations entailed by a study of recent Soviet developments. These can be summed up by saying that they are but another phase of that peculiar "permanent revolution" of which Stalinism is the practical (and to some extent the theoretical) expression; a "permanent revolution" which, unlike the one dreamed of by Trotsky, proceeds from above, not from below, and whose object appears to be the continuous remaking of society and the prevention of any kind of sta-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bility. This revolution has now been going on over thirty-five years, and the momentum it has acquired, so far from slowing down, seems if anything to be accelerating. It is certainly spreading over a continually growing area, and there appear to be no internal brakes within the system which would allow it to settle down at some point and become conservative, in the sense that every post-revolutionary regime has hitherto become conservative once the original aim of the revolution had been achieved.

The illusion of an imminent stabilization of this kind is probably responsible for most of the blunders committed since 1917 by those who have had to deal with the phenomenon—from Communist leaders like Trotsky to conservative statesmen like Winston Churchill. In one way or another, they all assumed that the familiar historical process would repeat itself, and that saturation, social or territorial, as the case might be, would set in. Thus Trotsky steadily predicted a "Soviet Thermidor"—the emergence of a conservative and saturated ruling class which would liquidate the Communist dictatorship. Thus American and British statesmanship at Yalta tacitly assumed that the Kremlin would stop for at least a generation to "digest" its vast territorial gains; for, as Eden frequently reminded the Tory party with that engaging naivety which seems to be the hallmark of traditionalism, the Soviet government, unlike Hitler, had plenty of undeveloped territory at home, and therefore no need for "territorial aspirations"; which of course was true, only it happened not to be very relevant. In one way or another, they have all—anti-Stalinist Communists, socialists, liberals, and conservatives—been baffled and disappointed by the continuance of the "permanent revolution." Indeed, it has become so permanent that even within the inmost ruling circle of Stalinism hardly anyone is safe from it.

The mechanism of this unique phenomenon is still obscure in some respects, but it would appear that the state-party regime in the Soviet Union is at the core of the permanent revolution, which cannot be halted so long as the party has not been got rid of. For the party—and this comes out very clearly from Stalin's last scholastic exercise—is self-centered and self-operating to a degree which makes complete nonsense of the belief that it is merely the instrument of the new managerial class. If it were, the revolution would already be at an end, for the managerial stratum shares with all other classes of Soviet society an almost desperate yearning for quiet and stability. The systematic distortion of the economy in the interest of capital investment in heavy industry, which is the core of the whole planning experiment, is certainly not due to managerial pressure, and neither is the drive to transform the collectivized peasants into inhabitants of "agro-towns." These measures, and the constant social upheaval and transformation rendered necessary by them, spring from the inmost dynamic of a self-centered autocracy which obeys no impulse save that of constantly remaking society, keeping it in flux, and preventing the emergence of stable classes with well-defined interests that could threaten the operation of the transforming mechanism.

This revolutionary autocracy, entrenched at the very heart of the all-powerful state machine, transforms society in its own image. Where the process encounters resistance, it resorts to "purges," and at the same time it expands into any vacuum which offers itself in Europe or Asia. At the moment, having more or less "digested," i.e. transformed, the East European satellites, it is engaged on the gigantic operation of penetrating into China. The process never stops for a moment. When it is not churning up the living body of society at home, it transfers its dynamic abroad. The motor which keeps it going, and which for want of another term must be called the Stalinist system, also sees to it that a proper balance is kept between the party and the army—twin pillars of an over-expanded capital industry which must stand or fall together.

WHAT is to happen to this *perpetuum mobile* now that its chief architect has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been removed from the scene, one can only surmise; but since its functioning had previously brought about an unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of a single individual, one may perhaps hazard the guess that the system will tend to become unstable, and even to disintegrate under the tremendous pressures stored up by its own operation. The task of holding the Communist party, the army, the secret police, and the economic bureaucracy in some kind of internal equilibrium seems beyond the power of the technicians who now have to operate the central mechanism. Something will have to give way, and though in principle the decision might fall in favor of relenting, of slowing down the inhuman tempo of investment and development, of allowing the tortured society some rest, it is in fact only too likely that relief will be sought in other ways. A measure of consolidation at home may well be accompanied by further expansion abroad. If the dynamic of the system cannot be broken, it can at least be shifted outward—away from the ruling bureaucracy, itself continually being churned up by "purges" to render it more obedient to its Communist masters.

In this respect, as in others, Stalin's last words offer few grounds for comfort. Though he adopted a wait-and-see attitude towards the outside world, his disciples may well be less circumspect, and they clearly share his fundamental belief in the impossibility of genuine coexistence. The recent frenzy of ultra-nationalist disruption of the last remaining links with the outside world is not a very hopeful sign. To interpret it as isolationism is to forget that we are not dealing with a stagnant, or even a stable society, but with a dynamic system torn by internal contradictions infinitely more violent than those characteristic of our kind of world. When one thinks of the people who must operate the levers of command now that Stalin has departed, with all his ruthlessness but without his authority, one may recall the state of Germany after Bismarck —and try to estimate the gap between the puny forces of destruction then at the disposal of European nations and the vistas now opening before us.

MARCH 1953

BARBARA GUEST

The world of my youth is ending.
Famous people are dying every day.
Gertrude Lawrence,
And now it is Stalin.
The last one will be Winston Churchill,
And after that probably,
My father-in-law.

There will be no one left,
Except those who remember
The old days,
And young people
Entering college
Who will read about it.

That's why I'm telephoning
You today, Alexander Nevsky,
To make an appointment with you
To ride out by the lake
Before they dredge it,
Or next winter's skies refuse
to fill it,
Or by some miracle
The mountain waters won't
feed it.
I thought we might ride
Out there today
And look at all those
Dead bodies again.

BARBARA GUEST is an art critic as well as a poet, and has published in various periodicals. This is her first appearance in COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POINT FOURISM IS NOT ENOUGH

Power Politics and the Economic Fallacy

G. F. HUDSON

FROM time to time in history philosophers rediscover certain facts about human nature which have always been known, but have been for a while, owing to some special circumstances or fashion of thought, ignored and forgotten. A striking example of this has been the new recognition within the last twenty years of the potential importance of the will to power as a motive in human affairs. The 19th century was extremely unwilling to admit that the desire for power could be of any significance as a determinant of action in comparison with incentives definable in purely economic terms. On the one hand there were held to be the profit motives of individuals competing in a system of private enterprise; on the other, the economic interest of classes which could only be advanced through some kind of collective organization. The foreign policies of nations seemed to reflect the same ruling purposes; nationalism and imperialism were explained as emanations of economic man. Even altruistic motives, insofar as they were admitted, were in a sense economic, for the aims of the altruist were assumed to be material betterment of his fellow men. There were certainly some dissidents, such as Nietzsche, who saw mankind in a very different light, but they were dismissed either as lunatics—and Nietzsche, after all, died insane—or as romantic reactionaries yearning for an impossible heroic past. The prevailing habit of thought held that all human beings who mattered sought first a higher "standard of living," whether for themselves alone or for groups of which they were members.

The First World War somewhat disturbed this outlook and the influence of Freud also had an unsettling effect. But it was only in the late 30's, when the shadows of Hitler and Stalin had begun to loom darkly across an increasingly anxious world, that at least a section of opinion began seriously to question the dogma of economic man as the 19th century had conceived him. In 1938, the year of the *Anschluss,* of Munich, and of the last phase of the *Yezhovshchina* in Russia, appeared Bertrand Russell's highly significant book entitled *Power: A New Social Analysis,* which boldly challenged the assumption of the paramountcy of economic motivation. In his introductory chapter Russell wrote:

> The orthodox economists, as well as Marx, who in this respect agreed with them, were mistaken in supposing that economic self-interest could be taken as the fundamental motive in the social sciences. The desire for com-

---

LIBERALS are becoming uneasily aware that the dictum that poverty equals Communism states only half the truth, and that there may be even less truth in its so widely accepted corollary—*namely that all America has to do to* win the "cold war" is pour enough money into backward Asia, Africa, and South America. GEOFFREY FRANCIS HUDSON, one of the keener analysts of the Far Eastern situation and no newcomer to these pages, here takes a few moments to cast a cool eye on the warmhearted recommendations contained in the writings of a noted advocate of this policy, Stringfellow Barr, whose *Let's Join the Human Race* (University of Chicago) and *Citizens of the World* (Doubleday) have provided many handy slogans for the critics of present American foreign policy. Mr. Hudson was born in Cheshire, England, in 1903, became a historian, and is now a Fellow of All Souls College at Oxford. During the war he served in the British Foreign Office. Among the books he has written are *Europe and China* and *The Far East in World Politics,* and he is a contributor to the *Economist, Twentieth Century,* and other journals devoted to the discussion of contemporary politics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

modities, when separated from power and glory, is finite, and can be fully satisfied by a moderate competence. The really expensive desires are not dictated by a love of material comfort. . . . This error in orthodox and Marxist economics is not merely theoretical, but is of the greatest practical importance, and has caused some of the principal events of recent times to be misunderstood. It is only by realizing that love of power is the cause of the activities that are important in social affairs that history, whether ancient or modern, can be rightly interpreted.

This was the response of a philosophical scientist to a world situation brought to crisis by violent tyrannies which did not at all fit into schemes of political behavior based on postulates of rational economic calculation. Eleven years later, after another world war had been fought and the "cold war" had succeeded it, a novelist painted a picture of an entirely totalitarian world in which the power of a party-state had become absolute, without even the remote competition of a liberal society. In *Nineteen Eighty-four* George Orwell makes the party boss explain to his victim who has been tortured in the "Ministry of Love":

The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. . . . We are the priests of power. . . . The old civilizations claimed that they were founded upon hatred. In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph and self-abasement. Everything else we shall destroy—everything.

THE inability of believers in the primacy of economic motivation to recognize the hypertrophy of the will to power in modern systems of totalitarian dictatorship has been a major factor in the failures of democratic government to arrive at a realistic estimate of the character of these regimes before bitter experience taught what should have been obvious from the beginning. Assumptions which are more or less valid for liberal societies were applied to the interpretation of totalitarian policies for which they were entirely misleading. The impulse to power is of course operative in a political democracy—it was, after all, a veteran parliamentarian, Aristide Briand, who once said that "there is no pleasure that can be compared to power"—but it is checked and restrained by the habits of constitutional government and by a diversity of autonomous group interests. Even in the old-fashioned type of royal autocracy governmental power was limited by the traditional vested interests of propertied and priestly classes. It is only with the arrival of the modern totalitarian state that political power has, as it were, really come into its own, overriding all economic interests and exploiting the unprecedented opportunities of domination provided by new developments of technology and state organization. Democratic publicists and statesmen, however, long persisted in trying to explain the unfamiliar phenomena in terms to which they were accustomed, and expected the new race of dictators to behave as if they were businessmen in disguise. The British appeasement of Hitler was largely due to a fixed idea that what the Nazis were really after was a more equitable share of international markets—a belief fostered by the Nazis themselves with their pathetic propaganda about Germany's tribulations as a "have-not" country. This idea lost its influence after Hitler's march into Prague, but it was soon replaced, both in Britain and even more in America, by the no less fatal delusion that the only aim of the Communist rulers of Russia was to carry on the peaceful economic development of their country in order to raise the living standards of the Soviet peoples. The new faith was expressed by Joseph Davies in a wartime supplement to his *Mission to Moscow:*

In my opinion, the Russian people, the Soviet government and the Soviet leaders are moved, basically, by altruistic concepts. It is their purpose to promote the brotherhood of man and to improve the lot of the common people. They wish to create a society in which men may live as equals, governed by ethical ideals. They are devoted to peace. . . . The British Empire, the Americas and Russia, along with China, are the great complementary powers of the earth. Their interests, their governmental ideas and purposes do not conflict.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IF EX-AMBASSADOR Davies had been right, there would have been no serious obstacle in the way of cooperation between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union. The policies of the American and British governments in 1945 were indeed guided by convictions basically similar to those of Davies, and it was only Russian actions which finally forced statesmen in Washington and London reluctantly to revise their estimates of the situation. Even then there were those who persisted in attributing every manifestation of Soviet aggressiveness to some Western provocation, such as delay in opening a second front during the war or the abrupt termination of Lend-Lease in 1945. But the course of events was too strong for them, and the picture of One World united in effort to keep the peace and improve the lot of the Common Man was replaced by that of the Two Worlds, with "containment" as the West's counter to the "Iron Curtain," and rearmament as an urgent need for nations which had hastily disarmed after the war in the belief that peace was assured.

It would be remarkable, however, if this great change in opinion, both at official and popular levels, had entirely put an end to the way of thinking which underestimated both the motives and effects of violent power in human affairs. Moreover, once the delusion of Soviet good intentions had been discarded, the pendulum swung from one extreme to the other, so that many who had seen the problems of the postwar world in almost exclusively economic terms now came over to the view that armaments and alliances alone mattered. The tendency to forget about wartime projects for world reconstruction under the stress of the new cold-war tensions provoked opposition from groups of internationally-minded idealists who were not Communists, but had visions of a world crusade against poverty and claimed that a policy of merely military containment could not even achieve its purpose of stopping Communism. This outlook has recently crystallized into a specific point of view which may conveniently be called "Point Fourism." Its most notable exponent in the United States has been Stringfellow Barr, whose pamphlet, *Let's Join the Human Race,* and book, *Citizens of the World,* have presented his case with a high degree of polemical competence. Closely associated with him is Justice William O. Douglas, who has contributed a preface to Barr's book, and whose own travel record, *Strange Lands and Friendly People,* is full of the sympathetic observation and large humanitarian feeling from which Point Fourism draws its greatest strength. In Britain views of a similar type are characteristic of the Bevanite section of the Labor party and find expression in Bevan's political manifesto, *In Place of Fear.*

THE case of Point Fourism, as argued by Barr, deserves careful consideration. He claims that Roosevelt's policy "called for a common assault on German militarism and negotiation with Russia in the context of general international cooperation for peace and prosperity," but that under Truman, America decided to "go it alone," canceling Lend-Lease, "sabotaging" UNRRA, turning down proposals in the UN Social and Economic Council for a World Development Authority, and finally launching the Marshall Plan as an act "done by Washington bilaterally, and not by the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, as a venture in mutual aid." As a result the United States, according to Barr, has been left with "that most useless of instruments, a foreign policy that does not appeal to foreigners," for most of the world does not share the American preoccupation with the threat of Communist aggression, and even the Atlantic Pact, in Barr's interpretation, had to be forced on an unwilling Europe by American economic pressure. Barr claims to speak on behalf of "some two billion human beings who are neither Russian nor American," who are not interested in a Russo-American quarrel, and demand, not dollar hand-outs conditional on conformity with American foreign policy, but a worldwide TVA whereby mankind by joint effort can tackle the basic problem of the "World Slum."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What he has to say about the American attitude to UNRRA is important because it provides a test case for his general view of recent history. He thus declares his opinion of what happened:

> UNRRA was the last organization in which Americans worked beside men of all races to attack the common economic perils of the human race on anything like an adequate scale. The next year UN records would register sharply the shift in American policy. American aid, except for a share in the UN Children's Fund, was going not where the suffering was most acute, but where cold-war politics directed it. This shift in policy amounted to a kind of secession from the human race.

IT MAY be of interest to compare this version with an estimate of the UNRRA record given by a British writer, Paul Winterton, in his book *Inquest on an Ally*:

> The total value of UNRRA aid was some £930 millions, of which the United States provided nearly three quarters and Britain about 17 per cent. . . . America resisted the temptation to use relief as a means of gaining either political concessions or economic privileges. In no case did she make internal political changes a condition of aid. She did not, for instance, demand that any country should drop its plans for socialization. She did not use her wealth to buy investments in the countries she assisted. . . . Recipients were not even required to empty their mouths of American food before they shouted their abuse.

During the whole of UNRRA aid, when an observer certainly not biased against the Soviet Union reported that "the urban populations of White Russia and the Ukraine have been almost exclusively dependent for meat and fats on UNRRA's supplies," the Soviet government was not merely doing everything possible to extend Communist control by force in Eastern and Central Europe, but was working up a propaganda campaign of the most venomous hatred against America and Britain. By the premises of Communist thinking this was indeed a political necessity in order to counteract the impression produced on masses of people under Communist rule by the flow of aid from capitalist countries. The men in the Kremlin and the little Stalins in Warsaw and Prague could not afford to admit that anyone but themselves might have a disinterested concern to relieve human suffering or that the imperialists of London and Washington could have any thought but for the exploitation and enslavement of peoples. Western generosity, therefore, had to be attributed to the basest motives, and in April 1947 Ilya Ehrenburg told the American people in a broadcast from Moscow: "You do not give; you buy and bribe." The Western nations which had made such massive contributions to the relief of distress in Eastern Europe would have been not human, but angelic, if they had not been discouraged from unconditional bounty by such insults. But even if they had been prepared to put up with official ingratitude in order to help the voiceless masses, they could not ignore the fact that any economic assistance to Communist-led countries which went beyond temporary supplies of food and clothing could only strengthen the war potential of a power which was openly hostile and actively enlarging its sphere of control. Moreover, both Britain and America had rapidly disarmed and demilitarized themselves to an extreme degree after the war, while Russia remained heavily armed; it became urgently necessary to rearm in order to deter Russia and her satellites from further advances, and rearmament could only be carried out at the expense of surplus resources which might otherwise be available for international economic aid. It was this situation, and not the seduction of President Truman by Wall Street, which produced the "secession from the human race" so much deplored by Barr. America had financed through UNRRA just that kind of unconditional and internationally administered aid which Barr recommends now as a solution for the world's difficulties, and had been repaid with slander and aggression. In the Marshall Plan America did not exclude Russia or her satellites, but insisted on a certain minimum of economic cooperation among European countries; Russia rejected the Plan, compelled her satellites to do like-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wise, and instructed Communist parties outside the Iron Curtain to sabotage its operation as much as they could. It was only after this experience that American aid came to be, as Barr puts it, "directed by cold-war politics."

WHAT else could it have been? Is it really argued that America and other Western nations with capital resources should have gone on pouring them into Communist-ruled countries without taking any notice of their hostility, or that they should have handed them over to a "World Development Authority" while leaving themselves and the weaker non-Communist countries they were helping virtually defenseless against Communist violence or pressure diplomacy? Barr avoids putting it as crudely as that, but it is the direction in which his argument leads him. He will not recognize the priorities imposed by the cold war, because fundamentally he does not recognize the existence of the cold war, or rather he considers it to be America's fault and not Russia's. It is America, and not Russia, that has "seceded from the human race" by "going it alone," even though every major international project since the war, from the control of atomic energy to international health measures, has broken down on the refusal of Communist states to abate their national sovereignties in the slightest degree or allow any kind of investigation or supervision within their borders. Even more remarkable for one who is not a Communist and describes himself as no fellow-traveler, Barr declares:

> Non-Communists in Europe know that we share one thing with Nazi Germany from which Communist Russia is free. Our economy is a war economy now, as Hitler's was. To some extent, like him, we are caught. Russia's economy does not depend on war.

Now it is quite true that a sudden cessation of rearmament programs in the Western democracies would produce dangers of economic dislocation and depression and that these dangers might be very serious if the situation were handled by men who have not learned anything since 1929. But most economists are now agreed that major slumps can be averted by measures which do not involve either resort to war or the abolition of capitalism. If the need for the rearmament programs were to disappear, the obvious substitute for the absorption of capital goods and the maintenance of full employment would be the kind of Point Four development projects that Barr advocates, and it is indeed extremely important that such projects, conceived on the largest scale, should be ready for operation whenever there may be enough relaxation in the cold war to make it possible to turn over resources from rearmament and alliance subsidies to purely economic objectives. But if at the present time cold-war politics take precedence over tasks which would be set by a "World Development Authority," that is not because citizens of the Western democracies prefer spending their resources on tanks and bombers rather than on clearance of the "World Slum"; it is because the politics of the states of the Soviet bloc have left them no option but to arm themselves and contain Communist expansion if they do not want to be overwhelmed by it.

IT MAY be true enough that "Russia's economy does not depend on war" in the sense that a fully planned and controlled economic system does not give rise to the special urge towards armaments as an anti-slump device which can (not must) occur in a capitalist economy. But this does not mean, as Barr suggests, that Russia remains inherently peaceful, while America is driven towards war by economic pressure. Russia is a danger to her neighbors, not because she is building up armaments to assure profits to a capital-goods industry, or because she seeks new markets for a surplus of production, but because her politics are essentially those of violence and domination. Those who are accustomed to believe that international conflicts can never be anything but by-products of economic interests are naturally unable to understand that habits of absolute power and political terror, unre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strained by law or respect for human rights and confirmed by the certainty of an exclusive possession of cosmic truth, can be a cause of collisions between sovereign states. But to suppose that Russia's rulers care about nothing but "improving the lot of the common people," and only started behaving roughly (insofar as it is admitted that they did) because of suspicions of American or British intentions, is to misunderstand the fundamental nature of such a regime as that which Malenkov has now inherited from Stalin. Communism is indeed theoretically concerned with the material welfare of mankind, but the principles of violent revolution and permanent party dictatorship have inevitably produced a state of mind for which everything is subordinate to the maintenance and expansion of power—a power which in violence, comprehensiveness, and arbitrary coercion surpasses all historical precedents. It is vain to expect such a power to change its basic character when it reaches a territorial frontier, and in fact Soviet foreign policy is simply Soviet internal policy tempered by caution when confronted by an effective resistance.

POINT Fourism is the creed of those who combine a keen and generous desire to bring salvation to mankind through an international TVA with an inability—or unwillingness—to recognize that totalitarian despotism in Moscow, and not selfish stupidity in Washington, is the main cause of the reversion to power politics which now bedevils world affairs. Insofar as they preach Russian innocence and oppose necessary rearmament and alliances, these people are a danger to the defense of the free world, even though they do not belong to the Communist fifth column. On the other hand, their criticism of the current policies of the Western democracies is valid within certain limits. There is undoubtedly a danger that with a continuation of present conditions Western political leaders and public opinion will tend to forget about the problems of the "World Slum," to be content with a merely negative policy of opposition to Communism, and to make the international conflict an excuse for neglecting even what can be done to realize Point Four ideals subject to cold war priorities. That way lies danger as well as moral failure for the West, for if the awakening masses of the undeveloped countries are offered no positive alternative of economic progress to the false hopes held out by Communism, the political drift towards Moscow and Peking will become a very powerful current. However wrong Barr may be in his estimate of Soviet reality, he is talking good sense when he writes:

> The bulk of the planet's population is in the position of a sick man visited by two doctors. One doctor offers him a pill, a Red one, which he claims can cure him. The other doctor is looking, not at the dying man, but at his rival, and is shouting: "Don't trust that man! He's a quack!" These exclamations do not constitute a medical prescription. Which doctor is the dying man likely to choose?

The statesman who wishes to contain Communism must distinguish very clearly between the *élan* of the Communist dictatorship itself and the propaganda appeal by which it attracts mass support. The former is essentially a non-economic drive for power and domination; the latter is an exploitation of economic hopes. The one can only be stopped by armed defense, the other only by a more convincing hope.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TOKYO'S NIPPONESE-JEWISH FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

The Emperor's Brother Testifies to Israel's Chosenness

ARNOLD JACOB WOLF

A CHANUKAH party in the Allied forces' Tokyo Chapel Center is pretty much like any other anywhere. The Jewish community invites the servicemen stationed in central Honshu and the evening follows the program ordained of old by the Jewish Welfare Board. Still there are regional distinctions. Although most of the GI's come from Flatbush or Omaha, here and there is a uniform of the UN Forces on "R&R" leave from Korea ("Rest and Recreation" officially, though there are numerous more vulgar interpretations)—a Turkish Jew, an Ethiopian Falasha, a Londoner. And the Tokyo Jewish community itself smacks more of Kiev or Berlin or Tientsin than of Brooklyn. It is made up of Jews of disparate backgrounds united only, it seems, by past persecution and the English they speak now.

The last party was only fair. The *latkes* couldn't be cooked because there was a gas shortage, which the Tokyo gas company always solves by turning the gas off during dinner hour when, it correctly assumes, most of it is used. There was lox (a Japanese delicacy) and cream cheese (which is hard to find), but the famous Tokyo bagel-baker was on strike. This was a great pity because the Japanese bagels, as well as *hamantashen* and *challeh* in their season, are among the best in the world. The band was jazzy and loud, like all Japanese bands, trying to give us the most for our money. The services were brief and impressive. But there was an undeniable shortage of women, the real point of the whole party. A couple of WAC's, several under-age daughters of the community, and a Japanese "Jewess" in kimono and *obi* were not enough to satisfy hundreds of Jewish servicemen.

It was under these unlikely circumstances that I was invited, almost too casually, to a dinner to be given the next night for Prince Mikasa, brother of the Emperor, and a reputed friend of the Jews. I accepted out of curiosity and because the club where the reception was to be held serves the best steaks in Japan. I was pretty sure that would attract some of the more interesting of the poorly fed Japanese aristocracy.

The American Club is the second best in Tokyo. The best one doesn't seem to admit Jews; most of the others are limited to correspondents, military officers, or nationals of a particular country. But it is a respectable place for thirty affluent Jews to invite as many important Japanese to dinner and a few speeches. The evening began at six and was over at nine, according to Japanese not Jewish *minhag*. The steaks were good, the speeches short, the mood cordial.

THE idea for the get-together had apparently been formulated first by Koreshige Inuzuka, president, according to its latest name, of the Nipponese-Jewish Friendship League, a fairly new organization with about four hundred members all over Japan. This organization is distinct from, and in some ways opposed to, the older and larger Japan-Israel Association, which had previously been the one more intimate with the Jewish community. Inuzuka's motive, I was told, for calling the party was to insinuate his own group into the graces of the Jews and dis-

---

SURELY never was a stranger "interfaith" gathering held than the one here described by ARNOLD JACOB WOLF. The author was born in Chicago in 1924, and, after an A.B. from the University of Cincinnati, took his rabbinical training at Hebrew Union College. He served as rabbi of Emanuel Congregation in Chicago, and is now Jewish Chaplain on the Staff of Commander, Naval Forces, Far East.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place the Japan-Israel Association, whose motives he impugned and whose methods he disclaimed. The Jewish community in Tokyo, disparate in background and religious inclination, but united by business ties and other circumstances, is always glad to pay the bill for any parley which promises them a greater measure of security or prestige in a country where almost all Jews are aliens.

Inuzuka, a former captain of psychological warfare in the Imperial Japanese Navy, is a man of ability and charm. When saved from death in a clash with a German submarine during the First World War, he had vowed to devote his life to some noble and private cause. That cause became the Jews. He told a *Nippon Times* reporter that his sympathies for the Jews were first excited when he watched the Russian Revolution from a battleship off Vladivostok and discovered in it a triumph of Jewish might and Jewish righteousness. Later in the 1920's, when he was a naval attaché in Paris, he identified himself with the French Jews and, in fact, kept a strictly kosher cuisine despite the incomparable blandishments of French cooking. What the French Jews thought of this Oriental is still a mystery, though they must have been generous enough, since during further assignments in Japan and China he showed numerous kindnesses to Jews.

In Shanghai particularly, which in 1939 was a refugee center, Captain Inuzuka found opportunity to help. Yet, as he states, his motives were far from purely disinterested. "I noted that the U.S. press was very much controlled by the Jews. Therefore, I expounded, if Japan remains friendly to the Jews in the Orient, it is possible to improve U. S. feelings toward Japan through the influence of mass media." A naive and plaintive blend of both philo- and anti-Semitism!

When the war ended Inuzuka was nominal commander of the occupied Philippines. He was called to Manila for questioning as a war criminal and was saved only by a letter from the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of America that described how he had saved hundreds of Yeshiva students from death. When Jews came in growing numbers to Japan after the war he resolved to renew old and mutually profitable connections.

For their part, the Jews, mostly graduates of the China community, willingly acknowledge their debt to Inuzuka and other members of his League for decisive help, and are satisfied to share some of their new wealth with tested Japanese friends. Their position in a fluid Japanese economy and polity is insecure and their previous experiences of danger make them sensitive to the winds of favor. The Jews of Tokyo are, in a more exact way than the Communists could know, both "cosmopolitan" and "Zionist," cosmopolitan in that they know many lands and many languages, but are native to none, Zionist in that the sentimental center of their patriotism is the land of Israel. Because they are wealthy and at least temporarily well settled they will never go there, except perhaps a few for the six months necessary to gain Israeli citizenship. The home city of their youth will remain Harbin or Singapore rather than Jerusalem.

In Tokyo they are a community apart, withdrawing from the native Oriental simplicity, barred from the company of the snobbish European colonials. They are showy, unlettered, clannish, and insecure. They are also kind to a stranger (a Jewish one, of course; any other would not be close enough even to be confronted as a stranger), loyal to what they conceive of as appropriate Judaism, and sophisticated beyond imagination. Their new community building, formerly an American general's home, will be as much used for bridge and business as for the ministrations of their modest Orthodox rabbi. But it will be closer to the heart of these people than most American community centers or synagogues. It is already a kind of gilded *shtibl* housing the memories of their dead and the *cheder* of their fugitive offspring. All in all, the Jews of Tokyo incarnate the wanderings, the perils, and occasionally the dignity of the Jew in an alien world. They are exiles even from themselves.

What they do for a living is in some cases a mystery. My best friend in the commu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nity, a New York veteran married to a beautiful *sabra*, left the country hurriedly when he was indicted for smuggling an enormous quantity of sugar. Few, if any, of the others are so clearly on the wrong side of the law, yet the distinctions between legal and extralegal are far from clear-cut in post-occupation Japan. A fast buck can be made and Jews, among many others, are not averse to making it. This adds more than glamor to the Imperial approbation of the Prince.

I was flabbergasted at the high caliber of the Japanese guests. They included Foreign Office officials, the presidents of two of the largest banks (and banks to the Japanese, as to the Swiss, are supremely important), the directors of three of the great manufacturing companies, some professors from Tokyo's leading universities, and—perhaps most significant of all for Jewish needs—the Director of the Immigration Bureau. I was seated—*nebach*—with the Prince and the president of the community on one side of me, and former Admiral Yoshio Yamamoto with an interpreter on the other.

What had led the committee to seat me next to the Admiral was surely the fact that I was a navy chaplain. The old man delicately ignored the slight implied by my very junior rank. One of Japan's great naval minds and a figure of importance in Japanese politics, he is now reduced by purge and senescence to the position of an elder statesman lacking both power and the will to power. Between the coffee and his heart medicine, he turned to me and pointed to a small stone object which he had unwrapped from a handkerchief. Calling upon my modest Japanese, I asked, "*Nan deska?*"—What is it? He answered with a flow of explanation and then pointed to my Jewish chaplain's insignia. The interpreter explained that the Admiral, an archaeologist by avocation, believed he had discovered an old tablet of the Ten Commandments in his Japanese garden. I examined the dig with care. So far as I can say, the stone was bare, but I did not disturb an old man's illusion.

I have not mentioned the Prince, though he dominated the entire gathering as soon as he appeared. Small, intellectual-looking, with the Semitic look that the Japanese admire, modified by their brownish coloring, he made a dignified and magnetic presence. Every Japanese in the room was strained between the ancestral compulsion to do obeisance to his lofty station and the modern, postwar dictum that the Imperial family is like everyone else—only more so. He was cordial and generous and seemed at home.

Prince Mikasa is the youngest of four brothers, of whom the eldest is the Mikado. By custom, as well as by inclination, this makes Mikasa the scholar of the family. Imperial rule is reserved for Hirohito (who is almost never called by that name), sports for the late Prince Chichibu, diplomacy for Prince Takamatsu. Mikasa bears his role with grace, assuming horn-rimmed glasses and a scholarly manner to fit.

The facts of Prince Mikasa's biography are almost as hard to ascertain as those of his Imperial oldest brother. In some ways they are even more difficult to collate since they describe a cloistered and extremely shy man. One reads of his annual *haiku* poem, frequently the best produced by his family, which joins the poets of the country in each January's competition. One hears of his experiments in square dancing, which American officers have taught him to do well. One notes his appearances, modest and encouraging, at many intellectual gatherings.

Perhaps the most interesting of Prince Mikasa's recent activities has been his investigation of the ceremonial mirror of the Imperial family. This ancient mirror, a traditional part of the coronation ceremonies, has recently been announced by some to be a vestige of Jewish influence. One hardy "authority" asserted that behind its quicksilver lay the Hebrew words "*Eheyeh asher eheyeh*," "I AM THAT I AM," the text of the Mosaic theophany. After a promise to ascertain the truth of this, the Prince returned without announcing a result. Though as a scientist he had wanted to examine the evidence, as a member of the royal house he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

felt constrained to refuse politely to manipulate the mirror. So the "authorities" may continue to make their claims for the mirror, but at Crown Prince Akihito's enthronement they will surely be silenced. Prince Mikasa's own interest in Judaism is founded on other, more respectable grounds.

I WAS asked to open the proceedings with an invocation. Foregoing any English remarks informing the Deity why and wherefore we were gathered, which would have required extensive translation, I limited myself to two Hebrew benedictions: the *motsi* for bread and the *broche* recited upon seeing a member of a Gentile royal house. I am not sure anyone below a king rates it, but I had never been so close before and I was not going to take a chance. The Prince later asked me for copies of the *broches,* which I wrote out for him in cursive script. He read them back to me haltingly, explaining that he did better with printed Hebrew characters. If he had done any better than he had, I would have fainted.

The first address was given by Leon Greenberg, a lawyer who had come from the States to try Japanese war criminals and never gone home. An ex-president of the Jewish community, he was probably chosen, as I was from among the three rabbis present, for his ability to speak English without accent. No one could have predicted how the interpreter would have translated a more European-flavored diction. Mr. Greenberg was brief, but the conscientious translator took twice as long as he did with each of his three paragraphs. He paid tribute to the Prince, to Captain Inuzuka, and to Professor Kotsuji, a doctor in Semitics from the Pacific School of Religion who, like the Captain, had once been a great benefactor of the Jews in China. (He was now reduced to advisory work with the American navy.) Professor Kotsuji comes to all of our holiday services in the navy chapel but, despite a knowledge of Hebrew and Judaism equal to that of any of us, he has never pretended to be closer than a friend—in which he is unlike other and less learned Japanese nowadays, who declare themselves to be Jews, half-Jews, or would-be Jews, though only a handful of them have actually been converted. Mr. Greenberg reminded the Japanese of their fine record of opposition to bigotry and hoped they would continue to befriend the Jews. We had had evidence of this in their adamant refusal during the last war to hand over to the Nazis the one Jew remaining in the Tokyo area, a penurious *shammes* of the Yokohama synagogue. Mr. Greenberg also remarked vaguely on some of the similarities between the two peoples, but he did not elaborate. It was for good will rather than ethnography that he and the other Jews had come.

PRINCE MIKASA then spoke—in Japanese, of course. He was precise and eloquent, correcting an occasional mistake by the interpreter, who formerly might have had to commit hara-kiri for it, but now satisfied himself with bows and blushes. The Prince spoke diffidently, almost haltingly, but with great sincerity and persuasiveness.

Unexpectedly, he began without the polite irrelevancies of the other speakers. He launched into an attack on the superstitious belief of many Japanese in the audience that their people was descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel. He deplored the theories, common here, that the Japanese and the Jews have some mystical affinity or spiritual identity apparent only to the initiated. The real relationship of the two peoples, more contrapuntal than identical, he considered to be more profound.

Then he spoke of himself, also unexpectedly and frankly for one upon whose words millions hang. He said that after the Western powers defeated Japan (he spoke of this more openly than I had ever heard any other Japanese do), he had had the *on,* the obligation, to Westernize himself. He had gone to school to Western culture. And, he said, in the six years of his study, he discovered one supreme fact; that the Jews were the key to Western civilization. The truth incarnated in Judaism, a truth of being rather than of theory, is the central meaning of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

history. I listened in amazement as he gave almost point for point the argument of Halevi's *Kuzari*, which culminates in the conversion to Judaism of the Khan of the Khazars. History had brought him—Prince Mikasa—to the Jew, he said, and Judaism had brought him back to himself. For the Jew is not only the father of the West, he is the scion of the Orient. He is the holy bridge (a traditional and poignant Japanese symbol) between East and West. Through understanding Judaism the Prince regained a sense of his dignity as a member of his people; he was again proud to be Japanese.

Prince Mikasa then became practical. He pleaded for an Imperial Institute of Jewish Studies in Tokyo, presumably financed by Jewish money. He said that only an understanding of Judaism rooted in scholarly research would be of value. He offered himself as a student in that Institute.

Then he spoke of suffering. He said that Japan had only begun to suffer, that her pride and her might had been humbled for the first time in Imperial history. But the Jews had often suffered and been degraded. The only hope for the Japanese was to learn from the Jews how to draw meaning out of their trials.

I flatter myself that I was one of the few appropriately touched by the words of Prince Mikasa. My fellow Jews seemed reluctant to follow his sensitive and modest reflections with sympathy. What they wanted was not praise, but terms, from Caesar. The other Japanese were either cool novices or ecstatic philo-Semites, therefore less deserving to be taken seriously than the Prince in his middle way. For me, it was an unforgettable moment, a challenge, a vindication.

THEN Captain Inuzuka spoke. He told of a mystic vision that had come to him in the night. As in some passages in Genesis, it was hard to tell whether God himself or his angels had visited him, but in any event he had received a message from on high telling him that the hope of the world lay in an alliance between India, Israel, and Japan. I am not certain whether he meant the nation or people of Israel, or how literally he meant to bind us all. I am inclined to think his ecstatic pictures were merely part of an accepted Japanese way of expressing ideas on world politics. No one got very excited. He said the atom bomb had been invented by Jews, that (though few knew the secret) the Japanese had invented a similar weapon. Like the Jew, the Japanese was both doer and thinker, an incomparable entrepreneur and a creative mystic. These two fabulous peoples—the only such—could if they would drink also from the wells of Indian tradition—remake Asia and the world. His talk, much longer than the others, though it continued in this vein, was interspersed with subtle remarks about the containment and defeat of Communism.

After the close of the banquet I was borne under by expressions of Japanese *politesse*. Admiral Yamamoto, as he took his lonely farewell, heaped blessings on my head. The civil officials insisted I meet with them at greater length so that they could pursue their inclinations towards things Jewish. The shopkeepers and the businessmen invited me to buy wholesale. Mr. Greenberg felt sure that even Inuzuka's long speech had not dissipated the splendid good will generated by the evening.

IT IS the custom in Japan to offer one's host a gift. So I turned to the Prince and offered to procure for him any Jewish books he might wish to read. He thanked me and asked me to answer a question that other Jewish representatives had been unable to do for him satisfactorily. "This is your year 5713," he said. "But 5713 years since what? The Christians count from the birth of their founder, we from our kings—and you?" I told him we began with the creation of the world. "Ah," he said, "it is the right way."

I went out into the foggy Tokyo night in confusion and pride. I wondered whether it was their recent defeat or the very truth of Judaism that had brought these strange people so close to us. And how their fate could be the mirror of our own. And for what a man might still be brought to royal estate.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARE WE ISRAELIS STILL JEWS?

The Search for Judaism in the New Society

ERNST SIMON

THE late Jan Huizinga, famous Dutch cultural historian, characterized the latter part of the Middle Ages in this way: "Life was so infused with religion that, at any given moment, the separation between sacred and profane could have ceased to be meaningful." This kind of religious situation may be called "Catholic," where religion seeks to sanctify and control the life of the individual and the community on every level—eating, drinking, work, rest, the principles of community and state; love and war. History has shown us many such "Catholic" religions. But it has also shown us that they are likely to produce from within themselves the seeds of their own destruction. For the time comes when various spheres of life throw off the yoke of religion, assert themselves as autonomous forces, and absorb religion as they previously had been absorbed in it. In such critical periods, a new kind of religion emerges, the "Protestant" type.

The protest at the root of this new religion is twofold, being directed, first, against the decay of the "Catholic" religion, and second, against the attempts of extreme heretics to deny that religion—already lost to the community as a whole—is of any value even to the individual. The "Protestant" religion seeks to compensate for the loss of the "Catholic" religion by special emphasis on the individual, his direct relation to God, and his personal salvation by faith—essentially an individual act—rather than by good works, which are always social acts. In a thoroughgoing and typically "Protestant" religion, good works cease to bear the sanctified character of "sacrament" or "commandment" and become part of a sphere of cultural life called "ethics" that is wholly or partially detached from religion.

The contemporary crisis of the Jewish religion is reflected in three crucial phenomena: the collapse of the ancient "Catholic" Judaism; the weakening of the new "Protestant" Judaism; and the futile attempt to achieve a new spiritual vitality by attributing a Messianic purpose to the creation of the State of Israel in our own day.

"Catholic" Judaism came into being in the first centuries of the Common Era, in the period of the Mishnah and the Talmud; but its roots were already to be found in the Bible, particularly in the legal portions of the Pentateuch. Its inherent nature became most clearly articulated during its two greatest crises; the first crisis, the Haskalah ("Enlightenment") of the 18th and 19th centuries, shook the foundations of the absolute role of "Catholic" Judaism; the second crisis, the nationalism of the 20th century, put an end to it for all practical pur-

---

ORTHODOX tradition, shaped by and for a people living apart, did not envisage the practical as distinct from the moral responsibility of Jews for the entire fabric of a society. Nor, indeed, did Reform Judaism. Today in Israel the existence of a Jewish state—raising inevitably the question, in what way *Jewish?*—adds a unique dimension to the problems of Judaism in the modern world. No one, perhaps, is better able to appreciate this crisis of faith in all its spiritual and moral complexity than ERNST SIMON, Israeli philosopher and educator, who lectures at the Hebrew University, which he also helps to administer. Dr. Simon was born in Berlin in 1899, and educated at Heidelberg. He was co-editor of *Der Jude* with Martin Buber, and taught at Franz Rosenzweig's Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus in Frankfort; then—in 1928—he emigrated to Palestine, where he has lived ever since. This essay was translated by Moshe Decter from a much longer Hebrew version originally published in *Luach Ha-aretz,* an Israeli almanac.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poses. In both cases phenomena appeared that had been developing slowly, but in concealment, over centuries.

The breakdown of "Catholic" Judaism was reflected in its inability to dominate all the spheres of life. In theory, it never relinquished this total claim. But it had lost the power to translate it into practical activity. Orthodoxy today rules only in certain homes, schools, and synagogues. It has been forced to give up, for all practical purposes, its sway over commerce, technology, society, the army, and the state; for modern economics, technology, *et al.*, are the products of a secular spirit. In modern times, religion generally, and the Jewish religion in particular, comes after the fact.

I

THE central concept of every "Protestant" approach is that of "culture." It is no accident that this word (Hebrew: *tarbut*) —so current among Israel's intellectuals, and endowed by them with the very highest spiritual values—does not at all have such a positive and elevated connotation anywhere in the Bible or Talmud. When the founders of the secular Hebrew schools of East Europe sought a term to distinguish their school system from the traditional *yeshivot,* they adopted the word *tarbut.* The new positive meaning of this term, which had been neutral or even negative before, was a function of its being a translation of the German *Kultur,* for which there is no real equivalent in Hebrew.

While the concept *Torah* testifies to a suprahuman, revealed source, the concept *culture* refers back to a human one; and it is precisely here that we touch upon the unique weakness of "Protestant" Judaism as against Christian Protestantism. The latter, it is true, likewise ran the risk, often, of having its teaching transformed into merely an aspect of secular culture, but the Protestant faithful knew how to distinguish in the teachings of their first Reformers and of the best of those who succeeded them, between religion and worldly wisdom—this, despite their appreciation of the latter. The chief historical reason for the ability of the Protestants to make this distinction lay in the fact that they still clung to the Bible as revelation, while rejecting the traditional interpretation of Scripture given by the Roman Catholic Church. They could, and did, base this attitude on the authority of the dogmas of primitive Christianity itself. Thus the Reformation could appear as a restoration of Christianity in its original evangelical form. Luther made Scripture the possession of all Christians when he broke the priestly monopoly on sacred and secular studies, and this constituted a religious "expansion" that compensated—at least in theory—for the Protestant transfer of universal temporal authority from the Church to territorial princes, and of the totality of worldly wisdom from priests to humanist university professors.

The modern liberal Reform movement in Judaism, coming as it did three centuries later, was unable to do likewise. It did draw secular and religious conclusions from the breakdown of "Catholic" Judaism, but these conclusions were, in the main and at bottom, only negative ones. While the Lutheran or Calvinist could claim that he was a better Christian than the Catholic, the liberal Jew of today generally knows that he is a less faithful Jew than his Orthodox co-religionist. The success of Reform Judaism brought a loss of faith in the authority and revealed nature, not only of the tradition, but of the Torah itself. And while Reform's stress on prophetic morality was certainly on a high level, it failed to provide a substitute for that unique Jewish content given to everyday life by Orthodoxy. So the Torah became, for Liberal Judaism, only one of the many aspects of knowledge that were subsumed under the general heading of "culture"; indeed, it became the relic of a foreign culture in a foreign tongue.

A second reason for the failure of "Protestant" Judaism, in contrast to the success of Protestant Christianity, is directly related to one of the fundamental characteristics of "Catholic" Judaism: in contradistinction to Roman Catholicism, Judaism has no central institution that fixes the articles of faith ob-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ligatory for every Jew. As a colleague of mine once phrased it, there are Jewish *dogmas*, but there is no Jewish *dogmatics*. The reasons for this are extremely complicated and need not be gone into here. Religious philosophy, the philosophical interpretation and defense of Jewish religion, we have had aplenty. But systematic theology—the interpretation of God, the world, and man on the basis of the Jewish religion—that is almost completely lacking in the older Hebrew literature.

Now, a "Protestant" religion absolutely requires a theology. Insofar as it is a religion, it neither desires nor is able to content itself with a "cultural" *Weltanschauung* alone. Despite all its concessions to culture, it seeks a vantage point of its own from which to approach the world, and it can find this only in a theology. Christian Protestantism was able to draw upon the great tradition of Catholic theology, even when it attacked and differed with it. Not so Jewish "Protestantism." The Jewish reformers who sought a Jewish theology were like children just learning to count. There was no one and nothing to assist them. Often enough, their attempts, in all their daring, looked to their traditional brethren like the behavior of a "*goy* studying Torah."

A THIRD factor that militated against the success of "Protestant" Judaism was the national character of the Jewish people. Saadia Gaon, when "Catholic" Judaism was in full bloom, could say, "Our people is a people only by virtue of its religion." By the time of the rise of "Protestant" Judaism, the sentiment had become: "Our religion is a religion only within the framework of the nation." But what of the individuals whose tie with the "nation" was on the verge of being broken, yet sought to guard their bond with the Jewish *religion* and even to strengthen it? These Jews knew, indeed, that Jews—unlike Christians—are born before they are made, but this plain fact no longer told them what it had told their ancestors. As they sought their individual paths to Judaism they became consumed by doubts as to whether the objective essence of being a Jew was capable of being attained in this subjective way. Yet they had no other.

They were rescued from this dilemma by Zionism—not all of them, but some, and even these only for a time, and superficially. For a while everything became clear: a great national movement had arisen that strove to "renew our days as of old" in the ancestral home, resuscitating the scriptural tongue, glorifying all the "sanctities of the nation," and assuring every adherent a full Jewish life. But difficult questions, particularly religious ones, began to appear as the national movement neared its goal: what would be the character of the new Jewish society? And if a state were created, what would it look like? The internal conflicts within Zionism, held so far in abeyance, now became sharper and clearer.

II

THESE questions now require immediate and practical solutions in Israel, but only "Catholic" Judaism has as yet found an official platform in that country. "Protestant" Judaism, though it has many adherents, has acquired no general religious voice, either organized or individual; it is thwarted by the alliance between official Orthodoxy, with its recognized institutions, and the indifference of the non-religious. On the other hand, responsible and dynamic "Catholic" Judaism in Israel is represented by two groups: the stubborn purists of the ultra-Orthodox Neturai Karta, and the circle around Dr. Isaiah Leibowitz, a lecturer in chemistry at the Hebrew University and one of the intellectual leaders of Israeli youth.

The Neturai Karta have lost all practical effectiveness by separating themselves from the state, which will not knuckle under to their demands. Dr. Leibowitz, like them, aspires to the "Catholic" ideal of a fully lived Jewish religious life. In his view Halachah, the prescribed practice, will cease being Halachah if it goes on relinquishing one area of life after another, and he de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mands that it reconquer all of them that it has lost. But to this end—and here he differs with the Neturai Karta as well as the Chief Rabbinate—it is incumbent on the Halachah to adapt itself to new circumstances and needs of which its ancient masters were ignorant: the needs of an independent state, a national economy, a complex technology, and military security. Jewish religion, according to Dr. Leibowitz, must produce new ways of life that the bulk of the community can live by—instead of demanding for itself and its Torah a sanctuary guaranteed by the secular and profaning work of *Shabbos goyim*.

The result of all this is paradoxical in the extreme: only "Protestant" Judaism, satisfied to save its own individual soul or that of its limited group, can allow itself today to remain conservative with regard to traditional Law, which may serve as a personal or social style, but no longer as the nation's way of life as a whole. Meanwhile that "Catholic" Judaism which feels responsible toward the whole community is driven to revolutionary withdrawal—like the Neturai Karta—or to revolutionary reform. The principal difference between the withdrawers and the reformers lies in their attitudes toward the State of Israel: the former deny it but the latter affirm it religiously.

THE late Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook, went even further and viewed the Return to Zion in his own days as a Messianic event. In his yeshiva at Jerusalem, so we are told, he established a small group of *kohanim* (descendants of the priestly caste) whose sole function was to study the Priestly Code, the laws of the Holy Temple and of the sacrifices—in order to be prepared for the great day when the Messiah himself would appear and the Temple service be reinstituted.

The full-bodied Messianism in Rabbi Kook's system was connected with his highly original understanding of the problem of the relation between sacred and profane. As he saw it, the religious deterioration of the Chosen People in their exile could be accounted for by the shriveling of the secular seed that served as the source of life for the Holy. The economic, political, and communal abnormality of the Jewish situation in *galut* resulted in a surplus of holiness, so to speak, that remained untranslated into effective activity and creation. The great merit of the Zionist movement was to activate this fund of holiness. In this way, secular activity fulfilled, and continues to fulfill, a completely religious function. Said Rabbi Kook: "Worldly holiness which sanctifies the profane is the holiness that is in nature and it reveals itself in the Holy Land."

Rabbi Kook was the sole rabbinical representative of "Catholic" Judaism to deal seriously with the fact of secularization in the life of the people, and to seek to restore the crown of the Torah to its ancient glory without turning his back upon the historical process of secularization. "Heavenly holiness is blessed according as the lower, secular foundation is informed with a pure spirit." For "the holy must be built on a secular foundation." Also, the realm of holiness expands as does the realm of the profane: "Spirituality cannot be achieved in our generation except through the fulfillment of the physical." Thus sacred and secular do not conflict, but nourish each other, even though there is a clear distinction between them, as between foundation and higher level. The people and its land—they are the concrete basis for the true life of holiness.

The peculiarly problematic nature of this conception of "Messianism in process" was illustrated in the way it was received by the Jews of Palestine. Rabbi Kook's approach led him to take an exceedingly tolerant attitude toward the *halutzim*, who had discarded the yoke of the traditional *mitzvot*. He saw them as *tsadikim* ("righteous ones") despite themselves, and compared them to the workers in the Temple who had been exempt from certain injunctions. This attitude was, of course, readily accepted in Palestine, especially by the workers. But it was not understood in that quarter that this same attitude led Rabbi Kook to come out strongly in defense of individuals involved

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in alleged or real acts of terrorism, because of his profound conviction that no Jew was capable of such deeds—just as he refused to admit that the *mitzvah* of the redemption of the land by the *halutzim* could be performed by sinners. For him the Jewish nation was a *corpus mysticum* and all its members were sanctified.

Great as the Rabbi was, a grave danger inhered in such a political Messianism as his. Under the cover of a teaching whose intention is wholly beneficent, good and evil can mingle promiscuously. As Rabbi Kook himself said: "Just as the praise of the Lord rises from the righteous, so too it rises from evil men; just as it rises from Paradise, so too it rises from Gehenna." The tragic conclusion of this doctrine of Messianism in process is evidenced in its most recent secular devolution: the coronation of the epoch of the new State of Israel as the "Days of the Messiah."

The principal change to be effected by the Days of the Messiah, according to Jewish tradition, is the achievement of political independence as a *means* to moral and religious wholeness. To drain the concept "Days of the Messiah" of its ethical content and religious form, and equate it with strictly political achievement, would open the door wide to a danger that threatens every human action: the greatest of all such dangers—the stilling of conscience. After all, the freedom and urge to criticize assume that the state and its leaders can make mistakes—but Messiahs never do.

A COMPLETELY different type of stricture must be brought against the position of Dr. Isaiah Leibowitz, who asserts that the religious crisis in Judaism requires "religious solutions" and "a new religious legislation." In other words—reform. He demands the kind of "program that will both require and make possible its being acted upon by the whole of Israel, not a program restricted to a sect of Sabbath-observers within a framework of a Sabbath-profaning people."

These words appeared in an article in *B'terem*, a staunchly Mapai fortnightly. One wonders whether the editors really grasped the basic intention of their guest contributor. For his program, while it would *permit* work on the Sabbath in necessary government and community services, in certain technological installations, and in economic, financial, and military activities, would *require* the state to enforce the observance of the Sabbath by all Jews, religious and non-religious alike. Dr. Leibowitz's article does more to outline the basis for a clerical regime than does all the activity, or lack of it, of the Chief Rabbinate in Israel. A clerical regime means a kingdom of priests *without* a holy people, as opposed to a theocratic state, which means a kingdom of priests *with* a holy people. A theocracy implies the wholehearted agreement of the bulk of the people in a great communal act such as the "we will obey and we will hearken" at Sinai, or the "pact" in the time of Ezra—an agreement to accept the Lord's Torah and fulfill it willingly. A true theocracy is not based on force, whereas a clerical regime cannot survive without it. Dr. Leibowitz's program is indeed a minimal program for the Orthodox minority, but if it were realized it would become, for the secular majority, a maximal program.

The only positive argument Dr. Leibowitz uses—this, to convince a secular audience—is his religious affirmation of the State of Israel. This supplies him with the Halachic principle by which to justify the reform he suggests, and with the link without which his program could not in any sense be considered "Catholic" Judaism. He writes: "The rabbinic prohibition of work on the Sabbath did not apply, as we know, to the service in the Temple—since it was the service of Israel, and not the work of any individual Jew for his personal needs or pleasure. We ought to consider, in all seriousness, whether the necessary services of a modern state should not occupy the same place in Halachah as did the sacrifices in the Temple."

Dr. Leibowitz holds that the need to preserve a religious order in Jewish society is sufficient to justify a systematic reform of Halachah. But, granting that, is there not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a grave danger that, in reconciling Halachah *toto caelo* with the needs of a modern state, Halachah itself may lose its character as a religious category by having its social role simply identified with its religious and moral ground? The requirements of security are quite legitimately defined by the statesman, but the man of Halachah must find the spiritual strength to reject decisions of state if and when they conflict with his religious principles. Thus it is not enough, by far, to undertake a revision of Halachah merely because it is required by the needs of a new polity: these very needs must themselves be founded on explicit moral premises. Dr. Leibowitz's thoroughgoing legal formalism threatens to deprive Halachah of its religious burden. Anyone who undertakes to reform Halachah must assure himself above all that the firm and *immediate* ground of faith is not shifted away from under him.

III

On the first anniversary of the death of Julius Guttman, late professor of Jewish philosophy at the Hebrew University, a group of intellectual, communal, and youth leaders took part in Jerusalem in a symposium on the prospects for a contemporary Jewish religious philosophy. Of the many views aired there, those on the pessimistic side made the greatest impression. The chief speaker was Gershom Scholem, whose negative argument ran as follows: Yesterday we had religious philosophy; tomorrow, perhaps, we may actually have theology; today we have neither. The state tore away the false mask that covered the crisis of Jewish religion. That crisis was laid bare. But there is hope that this nothingness may some day give birth to a new reality. Meanwhile we must wait, think, and learn.

But neither educational philosophy nor practical pedagogics can rest content with this abstract hope. While care must be taken to avoid the characteristic tendency of practical pedagogics to jump to premature and half-baked conclusions simply because immediate, practical decisions are required, this cannot justify passivity.

The philosopher can wait. Perhaps he is compelled to wait and to hope in order to be able to think and study. But children and their education cannot wait. "Meanwhile" they grow up and decide their own future and that of the state. While philosophers and pedagogues have been groping, a new generation has grown up in Israel whose contact with the Torah and with religion has come, not from original sources of piety and faith, but through a variety of one-sided interpreters, the bearers of wholesale secularization. A nine-year-old in a kibbutz who was asked, "What do you think? Who created the world?" answered with assurance, "The workers created the world." A Palestine-born high school student expressed himself in this way: "Religion is a matter for fools and wise men, but not for us, the in-between."

What we see here is the feeling of ease in being "in-between," and the transformation of in-betweenness into an end in itself. The abstention implied by the notion of "we, the in-between," seems to be characteristic of much of the youth of Israel, and is the result of the recent escape from the social and psychological conditions of a life led as a minority in exile. These conditions compelled the Jewish people to make special exertions, and by these exertions even mediocre minds rose to a higher level. But in the absence of such special effort in the realm of spirituality, religion is threatened, and while the "mediocre" now perform acts of heroism and pioneering sacrifice, action cannot compensate for a lack or weakness of thought, or for a want of individuality.

Recently, a sixteen-year-old sabra asked me: "What must I read in order to determine whether I am still a Jew?" Had a *galut* Jew, in the late 19th century or at the beginning of the 20th, posed the question of his Jewishness in this way, he would have been understood, in most cases correctly, to be raising a sociological or a nationalistic, but not a religious question. Zionism and the State of Israel, having secured the social and national conditions for an independent Jewish existence, have also made it possible to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

study the principles and commandments of the Jewish religion for their own sake—independently, that is to say, theologically—it being no longer either necessary or possible to base them on national needs alone. In the State of Israel the birth of a human being, as a son to his people, does not by itself make him a Jew. And so the history of Jewish religion has arrived at a new point of departure.

The sharp break with the heritage of the past, expressed programmatically in a scorn of the *galut* image of the Jew that verges on Zionist anti-Semitism, has reduced the role of tradition. As a very popular song among Israeli young people has it: "In place of yesterday we have a tomorrow."

IV

Even for those who hope to see a "Catholic" Jewish faith renewed, the Jewish religion in all its many forms has now become a deeply personal rather than communal question. The Torah, this "Catholic" Torah, this Torah of life that seeks to sanctify all of life, is known to us and yet lost to us; it is no longer "given," it has become a thing to be chosen.

This paradoxical situation calls for paradoxical undertakings: Judaism is indeed a "Catholic" religion when viewed objectively; but in the present crisis we can approach it only subjectively, from a "Protestant" point of view. The difference between the latter approach and that "Protestant" Judaism whose deterioration I analyzed above consists in the clear realization that this individualistic approach is not an end in itself, not a legitimate construction of Judaism as such, but merely a not dishonorable means whose use is forced upon us by necessity.

So long as we remain in a situation of beginning and of transition, we have neither the possibility nor the right to link religion to the state. On the contrary, it is necessary to keep them as far apart as possible. Not merely to guarantee the secular character of a democratic state, but especially to secure a completely free approach to the problems of religion. But even the secular State of Israel must provide the Torah full scope for development and influence, by assuring it freedom of action. The religious home, the religious school, religious life as it is expressed rhythmically during the week, on Sabbaths and holidays, and especially the social experiments of the religious labor movements—all these merit a positive attitude on the part of the state. Their existence must be based on legal right and not on sufferance. Those who act upon this right will realize fully that the secular majority of Israel is not with them, but they are still entitled, nay obligated, to act upon it as a necessary condition for the strengthening of their faith. Once it was the faith of all Israel, and "there is hope" still that it will some day regain that status.

Toward this end there must be a renewal of the spirit of prophetic criticism. That spirit was not the special property of the era of the prophets: it belongs to all of us who are heirs to their words and students of their message. The prophets of Israel sought to enlist all of life, beginning with social relations and ending with foreign policy, under the banner of holiness. In the Diaspora this "Catholic" demand could not be implemented on the highest level, that of social law, because the Jews lived under foreign rule and were not responsible for the whole of public existence. So the prophetic call became only a matter of conscience, naked and shaky. With, and after, the first Return to Zion from the Babylonian Exile, Pharisaic Judaism, arising out of its prophetic predecessor, succeeded in translating the demands of conscience—which had formerly been addressed to the people through the mediation of individuals—into life forms that were addressed to the individual through the mediation of the people as a whole. It is in the light of this development that we can understand the rabbinic dictum: "The Man of Torah is superior to the Prophet."

But in view of the destruction of those ways and forms of life, we must return, above all, to their original foundation stone: to the spirit of criticism by the prophetic

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conscience. Our aim must be, not the isolating of that spirit, as was the case with many "Protestant" Jews, but the evocation of the "catholicity" hidden in it, so that it may once more stamp itself on our whole life. Here there is no fundamental disagreement between such men as Martin Buber, for instance, and Rabbi Kook: both of them deny that Judaism is an isolated religious province standing separate within a larger secular life; it is, rather, a mighty experiment in the transformation of all of human life into one great sanctified whole. So long as the experiment goes on—that is, until *final* redemption—whoever truly yearns for redemption, in Rabbi Kook's words, "will be able more keenly to discern the difference between sacred and profane."

IN THE land of Israel, we have been given the chance to sanctify certain areas of existence that had become secularized in exile. There lies, in this opportunity, a great hope—and a no less great danger. The hope is the sanctification of the profane, including the state; the danger is the profanation of the holy, including religion, through politicalization.

The only way to pursue such a course of hope is to adopt moral and religious criteria with which to evaluate what is done and what is left undone in our midst. Our positive attitude toward the State of Israel cannot be a "Messianic" one that obscures evils; it must be a critical one that reveals evils in order to correct them. We need men who will constantly ask disturbing questions about every aspect of our life as a people.

Frederick the Great in 1752, writing in his political testament on the instruction of the young princes, his sons, commands their teachers "to speak of the army in the same hallowed phrases as priests use in reference to Divine Revelation. . . ." Jews have always rejected this attitude and still reject it when they encounter it in another people. Shall we accept it now when a leading educator compares the "Kingdom of Priests," which is the heritage of the past, with the "Kingdom of Soldiers" that has taken its place, and when he asserts that the future belongs to this latter?

It is here that we are called upon to utter our "Nay" with complete clarity. We can draw an *a fortiori* argument from Maimonides, who declared that no man can know the form of the Messianic Era. But we can all envisage what the form of those Days will *not* be and from this negation we can infer its converse. Judaism's miraculous force of life lay in the "Nay" that it knew how to utter in the face of every call to redemption that did not fit the image of the true Redemption: Christianity, Islam, Sabbatianism, Communism. And by the strength of that negation, the People of Israel remained *the* People of Redemption and guarded the hope of redemption in an unredeemed world. To attribute a Messianic character to the State of Israel is equivalent to losing the criteria of true Redemption.

Above all, the individual Jew must begin with himself. In his last novel, *Die Schuldlosen,* the late Jewish poet and philosopher Hermann Broch uttered this indictment of those who, at ease with themselves, ignore the evil that is done before their eyes: "This indifference toward the suffering outside you is but the consequence of your indifference to the man within you." The hope of the hopers is that we may be freed from this indifference to the man within us and outside us. And this hope is based on faith.

Not a few see in the history of Israel, and especially in the events of the last few years, the revelation of Him who "records the generations" and "orders the cycles of time." These people who sense the approach of the Days of the Messiah can no longer discern the difference between holiness and profanation, or even between good and evil. By contrast, the faith of the hopers, of those who desire to remain Jews—or better still, who desire to become Jews once again—their faith remains strong and unshaken in Him who placed the true redemption of man *in the future,* in the Days of the Messiah and the World to Come. This is the faith in Him who made the distinction between sacred and profane.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE OUTLOOK FOR LABOR UNDER EISENHOWER

The Organized Need to Be Reorganized

A. H. RASKIN

EVEN before the Eisenhower sweep, signs were plentiful that American unions faced the unpleasant necessity of reevaluating their basic functions and thinking through their relationship with the whole public and their own rank and file.

Thinking has never been the strong suit of American labor. Even less so now that unions have grown fat following a road charted seventy years ago by Samuel Gompers and turned into a high-speed highway half a century later by Franklin D. Roosevelt. So long as union leaders could deliver more money and more security to their members on a regular basis, there was little disposition to worry about anything further off than the next contract negotiation. This has been particularly true in a period when jobs were plentiful, prosperity general, and the federal government friendly.

Unions, to be sure, always knew exactly what was wrong with every other section of our population. They had plenty of advice to offer industry, farmers, Congress, the White House, Russia, England, France, Germany, Spain, Argentina, or what have you. But the same critical intelligence that volunteered solutions for everybody else's problems was seldom applied to their own. Unions were content with the way they were managing their own affairs, and there was reason to believe their members were content, too.

FEW jobs offer the same assurance of lifetime tenure as union presidencies. No corporation head could be as certain of reelection to his post year after year as the man who sat opposite him at the bargaining table. In international unions with hundreds of thousands of dues-payers, and in local unions that numbered their members in dozens, there was the same tendency on the part of the rank and file to keep the same men in office perpetually. Even when a leader passed his Biblical three-score-and-ten, he could—and usually did—hang on to his job.

That was not the only measure of the extent to which unions held the allegiance of their rank and file. Even more significant was the response of workers in National Labor Relations Board voting, in which they were asked to decide whether unions were to be authorized to bargain for union shops. This voting requirement was established by the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. The sponsors of that law made no secret of their conviction that the union shop was a device foisted upon workers by union bosses in order to shackle them to unions and force them into economic and political subservience on pain of losing their jobs. Given the right to express their own views on such an arrangement, upright American workers would have no part of the union shop; that was the reasoning of the labor law's authors.

They were proved almost completely wrong. Instead of rejecting the union shop, workers voted overwhelmingly for it. In balloting involving thousands, those who voted to require everyone to hold a union

---

FOR organized labor, the election of Eisenhower marked the end of an era—more so perhaps than for any other section of the population. A. H. RASKIN here suggests that deep changes had already taken place under Truman in the relations of labor leaders, both to their rank and file and to the public, which the election returns only confirmed. So long as prosperity reigns, all may be well, but what if our economy runs into serious trouble? Mr. Raskin reports on labor for the New York *Times* and is a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

card in order to hold a job ran to 90 per cent or better. In many places the union shop got a vote of more than 99 per cent. The results were so discomfiting to those who had expected to expose the unpopularity of union "serfdom" that they dropped the voting requirement from the law, and left the union-shop issue for direct resolution through collective bargaining without sounding out the rank and file.

Unions were able to take additional solace from the solidity of the front they offered in major or minor strikes. No matter how abstruse the point of controversy, or how stubbornly prolonged the battle, most unions could count on their members to stay away from work—with little or no complaint—until the leadership gave the signal to return. What is more, the advice of the high command was almost always decisive in the acceptance or rejection of a settlement proposal, even when the vote was taken by secret ballot under impartial auspices.

None of these idyllic conditions has changed in any significant degree. Death is still the main route out of union office; the few officials who retire earlier usually do so with an honorary title and an increase in pay. Workers are still willing to surrender some of their own freedom to make their unions strong, and strikes are still potent enough to make it unusual for employers to try to break them. Why, then, is it important for American labor to overcome its distaste for serious thought and do a little rechecking on where it is going and how it hopes to get there?

Part of the answer—but by no means the largest part—lies in the arrival of a "businessman's government" in the White House and Congress. Labor's political strategists have submitted a mass of comforting statistics to show that the great bulk of union members strung along with their leaders in voting for the Democrats. Actually, the voting figures indicate wholesale defections in most key industrial centers; the more candid union chiefs concede there is little carry-over into politics of the economic loyalty workers feel toward their unions.

What accounts for this gulf between leaders and those who refuse to be led? It is a compound of property-mindedness on the part of a rank and file that takes full employment for granted; a continuing inability on the part of unions to identify themselves with the total welfare in a way that carries conviction even among their own members; a distrust of the political sagacity of union leaders based in large measure on their bumbling approach to the Taft-Hartley Act; and a puzzlement about what there was in the Democratic record of recent years that entitled it to labor support.

GROUP memories tend to be short. The depression that forced millions on public relief and swept the New Deal into power is twenty years behind us. The factory worker or building mechanic, with his pay check of $85 to $125 a week, has more income, more security, and more leisure time than most white-collar employees. The line between workers and the middle class grows less and less sharp. Despite the uncertainties of a semi-war economy, we are falling into a roseate economic daydream comparable to that which drugged the country in the 20's, when William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, spoke over the radio under the sponsorship of a Wall Street investment house and every worker dreamed of becoming a millionaire.

In this kind of environment, concern about high taxes and high prices tends to overshadow consideration of the extent to which government policies have helped push up wages and strengthen unions. The "mess in Washington" and the issue of Communist penetration of government agencies were as persuasive in influencing labor votes as the votes of women, farmers, and other sections of the electorate.

In a real sense, there was nothing new in this divergence between the rank and file and the upper echelons of labor. The worker, in his role as citizen, has always been swayed by considerations that have nothing to do with his union button. He is not inclined to swallow the idea that what labor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thinks is good for it is necessarily good for the country, any more than he is to accept the same idea when applied to industry.

This spirit of political independence has grown stronger as unions grew bigger and more bureaucratic, with workers given a steadily declining voice in the determination of the wages and conditions under which they work. Industry-wide bargaining has inescapably reduced—indeed, virtually wiped out—the worker's direct influence over his conditions of labor. He is an automaton responding to the will of absentee officials whose authority over him is far greater than any his employer is able to exercise. Even in smaller unions that negotiate on a local basis, the worker is likely to feel constrained to vote "yes" because he lacks the possibility or courage to speak out when in disagreement with his leaders.

When he gets into the polling booth in a municipal, state, or national election, the worker is on his own. If the union's officially stated political outlook corresponds with his own, all well and good—if not, it will be ignored. For all the stridency with which they set forth their views, union heads have not been able to persuade their members that they know any more about how the country should be governed than the members themselves.

One powerful factor in the political skepticism of the union rank and file has been the uncompromising fight waged by all branches of labor against the Taft-Hartley Act. Yet most union members refused from the outset to believe that the law was vicious in all its provisions or that it spelled doom for the union movement. Five years of experience in which the big unions got bigger, fattened their treasuries, and expanded their economic power, did nothing to make their members think otherwise.

They were little swayed by the argument that the full damage would not be felt until the country went into a financial tailspin and employers had an incentive for picking fights with labor, or until a Republican administration took over and really used the law against labor. What was clear was that, by their insistence on outright repeal, labor's lobbyists were making it impossible for their friends in Congress at least to eliminate piecemeal many of the most anti-union provisions. As early as 1949 Senator Taft was ready to sponsor a long list of amendments almost all of which would have eased the restrictions the Act put on union practices, or at least speeded up the processes carried over from the old Wagner Act for the protection of unions. These amendments died because the White House, acting at labor's behest, insisted on repeal or nothing. The Republican-Dixiecrat coalition in Congress made the answer nothing, to the vast relief of many pro-labor Congressmen who felt the Taft-Hartley Act contained much that was worth keeping, and thus had no appetite for a record vote on repeal.

In any event, it was too much to expect that workers who had been told in 1948 that the sure way to get rid of the Taft law was to elect President Truman and a Democratic Congress, would be profoundly moved by the same issue when it came up again four years later, with absolutely no progress toward repeal having been made in the interim. This was only one of a long list of disappointments with the Democratic record.

The New Deal really flourished in F.D.R.'s first two terms. When he retired Dr. New Deal in favor of Dr. Win-the-War, the momentum of social legislation slackened, and Harry Truman never succeeded in restoring it. Outside the international field, labor found almost nothing to applaud in the record of the Democratic-controlled Congresses. It became increasingly hard to find any concrete basis for assuming the stability of the economy to depend on the preservation of Democratic rule, and many workers latched onto the idea that it was "time for a change." The fact that their own leaders had tried hard to get the Democratic presidential nomination for Ike in 1948 helped fortify the notion that the change would not be a disastrous one for the man whose weekly pay envelope was the only passport to the good life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How correct this judgment was no one can be sure this early in the Eisenhower era. On balance, it is probably accurate to say that the President has made a more conscientious effort to be fair and friendly in his dealings with organized labor than labor has made to give him a reasonable chance to demonstrate the sincerity of his good intentions.

Eisenhower appointed an AFL union president as Secretary of Labor and instructed him to set up an advisory committee consisting of representatives of labor, industry, and the public to suggest ideas for Taft-Hartley revision. The labor representatives lost no time in demanding that the advisory committee be turned into a legislative body in which decisions would be made by majority vote. This torpedoed the project. The representatives of industry, convinced that labor would gang up with the representatives of the public to keep them in the minority, refused to participate unless the committee acted as a sounding board only, with Secretary Durkin and the President free to adopt whatever of its ideas sounded good to them for inclusion in the administration's own recommendations to Congress.

In the Congressional hearings on changes in the Taft-Hartley Act, union spokesmen have reverted to the all-or-nothing theme that proved so unpopular even when their supposed friends were in power. This represented a baffling change of tactics, since both the AFL and the CIO had declared immediately after the election that they realized it was childish to keep talking about repeal in the light of the GOP sweep.

In keeping with this changed attitude, union leaders conducted private talks with top-ranking Republicans in Congress and the White House, and everyone got the impression that some real collective bargaining was going on designed to hammer out a program that would kill some of the clauses labor found most repugnant and make the law more equitable all around. Instead, George Meany, the AFL's new president, and Walter P. Reuther, his opposite number in the CIO, went before Congress with a list of amendments so extensive that they left nothing of the original law but its name.

It is true that industry exhibited little more statesmanship in its own Congressional testimony. After a campaign in which their watchword had been less government meddling in labor-management relations, the spokesmen for major industrial groups flooded Congress with suggestions for making the law even harsher and for increasing the long list of interferences with bargaining it already contains. Both the National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce called for the abolition of industry-wide bargaining. In effect, this project for chopping up big unions into little ones is so doubtful in both its philosophical and economic implications that most industrial-relations experts on the management side frankly admit they do not feel it should be carried out. And some industries find it such an advantage to do their bargaining on an industry-wide basis that the Chamber of Commerce representative before the House Labor Committee felt it necessary to retract some of his own denunciations of the destructive and monopolistic consequences of such bargaining. Wherever both sides wanted to proceed on an industry-wide basis, he proposed that Congress give the green light.

Labor's inability to exhibit more flexibility in its approach to Taft-Hartley revision put the freeze on the apparent willingness of the White House to meet labor halfway in trying to achieve a more perfect law. Eisenhower is no expert in union matters; he proceeds on the general theory that labor and management can get on well together if they want to get on, and that government should interfere as little as possible in the process. The reluctance of labor to help him draw up a moderate program may cause the President to throw the entire problem in Congress' lap. In any event, this is bound to strengthen the hand of the Republican extremists who feel the only thing wrong with the law is that it is not tough enough. Most observers are beginning to abandon

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hope that anything will be done in the present session of Congress to make it better, and some are afraid that it may be made worse.

The mishandling of the Taft-Hartley issue focuses attention on a much larger issue—the necessity for labor to decide what its relations with government are going to be. For twenty years, in peace and war, in depression and boom, the government has been the dominant element in many of the most crucial situations affecting union welfare. The CIO was a child of the Wagner Act and its key unions relied on the White House for major support whenever they got into trouble. The AFL, since few of its unions negotiate on a national basis, was less dependent, but by no means free.

Yet even with Harry Truman, who liked to assure labor it had no better friend anywhere, it became increasingly evident in recent years that unions would be well-advised to cut the umbilical cord and handle their relations with industry without reliance on the White House. The 1952 steel strike, the longest and costliest in the country's history, was in large measure a product of government bungling that stifled any real attempt at collective bargaining and was in the end as harmful to the union as to the industry. The railroad unions, which began depending on government even before Franklin Roosevelt took office, finally reached the disillusion point in their two-year tug of war over federal operation of the transportation system and federal dictation of contract terms.

The concentration of economic strength now in the hands of American industry and unions is bound to create situations in which a strike will force the government to step in to protect the national welfare, but the number of such situations is likely to be minimal if the national interest becomes the sole yardstick for intervention. Even the eight-week shutdown of the steel industry in a period of high-level military production failed to produce any really acute crisis. In the past, the tendency has been to jump in and then discover later that it would have been better to stay out.

On the record, the new administration is committed to the notion that it should keep its nose out of labor-management relations. Both sides have given this policy their fervent endorsement. But whether this hands-off policy will stand the test of a knockdown struggle in any pivotal industry remains to be seen. It also remains to be seen how loyally labor and management will cling to their own professed desire to settle things on their own.

The administration is putting its faith in "preventive mediation," a device that has been tried with varying degrees of success ever since the first union and the first employer found that they could talk more satisfactorily to a third party than they could to one another. How well mediation works depends in part on the ingenuity and tact of the mediator, but even the most adroit one can do little when the contending parties are determined not to agree.

Two factors seem to threaten rough going for the Eisenhower effort to cut down strikes by getting mediators in early. One is that the man best qualified to make the policy work is being dropped as director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. He is David L. Cole, himself a Republican and by all odds the best man available for the job. But he has fallen afoul of Senator H. Alexander Smith, chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, and for reasons that defy rational analysis. Mr. Cole's removal will not only be a loss to the effectiveness of the Service but a blow to the morale of those who remain.

The other difficulty is that the stress the administration has put on mediation is being interpreted in the field as a mandate for the assignment of a federal mediator as soon as labor and management file the sixty-day notice of contract expiration that is mandatory under the Taft-Hartley Act if a union is to be free to strike when its contract runs out. But putting a mediator on the scene before the bargaining gets under way, and before the parties are able to make any real

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

assessment of the chances for independent agreement, is assigning him to the status of another piece of furniture. Timing is the essence of successful mediation, and timing goes out the window when the mediator has to step in before he is wanted.

The serious pressure for getting the White House back into direct involvement is likely to come when and if a strike occurs that shuts down a basic industry and throws several hundred thousand workers out of work. Some unions have not even waited for such a situation. The CIO Textile Workers Union, faced with demands for wage cuts from Northern textile manufacturers, have asked the President to declare that he is opposed to any reduction in pay standards. The CIO itself has let it be known that it would like to have a pipeline into the White House in the form of a presidential aide specially versed in labor's problems. It stoutly denies that what it is after is a labor-fixer, but it is hard to see how the job could avoid becoming that in a situation labor considered critical.

BUT labor's relations with government involve much more fundamental considerations than the mechanics for handling industrial disputes. Most important of all is the course the government will follow in maintaining full employment and a high standard of prosperity when defense production begins tapering off toward the end of this year. The drop in military expenditures will not be a precipitate one unless Republican budget-choppers change present schedules, but it is obvious that it is time to begin planning for keeping jobs and payrolls high when the cut does make itself felt in a substantial way.

The President has made a reassuring move toward such planning by appointing Professor Arthur F. Burns of Columbia University his chief economic advisor. Dr. Burns profoundly senses the importance of finding ways to control the business cycle instead of letting it control us; but his ideas are going to need effective labor support if they are to have any chance of prevailing against the "give business its head" forces in Congress. The President has shown a deplorable lack of willingness to provide constructive leadership in his relations with the legislative branch, and in this matter his disinclination may be heightened by his basic desire to restore the pre-New Deal principles of *laissez-faire*.

To be politically and practically effective in this all-important field, labor will have to go in for a comprehensive overhauling of its collective bargaining policies and its relations with the public. It is hard to exaggerate the extent to which popular feeling has swung away from labor in recent years. At the very time that union members were tending to become more and more middle class in their standards of value, the middle class was becoming increasingly hostile to union progress.

One obvious reason for this development was the extent to which unions allowed themselves to become the "fall guys" in the inflationary process. It became standard practice in the postwar period for employers to blame higher prices on higher wages, and unions, far from battling energetically against this exaggeration of the role of wages in raising living costs, often became the chief lobbyists in Washington for federal authority to pierce price ceilings—seeing in this a way of winning increased pay for their members.

IN GENERAL there has been an unhappy gap between protestation and performance in union expressions of devotion to the common good. For all the eloquence of a Meany or a Reuther in declaring that unions are not a selfish special interest and that their welfare is bound up with the advancement of the total community, the record of readiness to make specific sacrifices in the larger interest of the whole public is not an impressive one. Utility unions fight the spread of public power projects because they feel they can bargain better with private enterprise; building service unions team up with landlords to lobby for the elimination of rent controls; maritime unions press a "ship

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American" drive, while their parent organizations clamor for government to do more to stimulate foreign industry.

Labor's tendency to forget broader considerations when they conflict with its own immediate interests (and labor certainly has no monopoly in this respect) has been conspicuously reflected in its attitude toward the mobilization of America's resources for the cold war and the actual fighting in Korea. American unions have seen from the start the necessity for combatting the Soviet threat with all the energies we can muster. Unfortunately, this recognition has been accompanied by few acts on labor's part that reflect a real sense of urgency about the whole problem, especially where any sacrifices are entailed.

Labor cannot escape its full share of responsibility for the collapse of wage and price controls. Unions were just as zealous as industry in punching holes in the government's anti-inflation program. Each group took refuge in the easy excuse that the other fellow was getting away with murder, and there was nothing for it but to commit murder, too. Happily, and neither side can take any bows for the fact, the process did not turn from murder into collective suicide.

In the early stages of the defense build-up, when diversion of critical materials to war industries and the sound decision of the military authorities to put up new defense plants in places remote from our big industrial centers were causing some temporary dislocation of civilian employment, particularly in Detroit, union leaders howled about the "bungling" in Washington. Far from complaining about the government's failure to do anything substantial about the decentralization of industry as a protection against atomic attack, labor has consistently teamed up with the business-as-usual forces to put more and more work into communities that are already excessively vulnerable because of their concentration of heavy manufacture.

There are other elements of union practice that have cost labor the public's confidence. Slowness in dealing with the problem of racket infiltration has been one, although there are signs that the long period of apathy is at an end. The AFL, in which corruption has been more of a problem than the CIO, has called for a clean-up in its affiliated unions. Unfortunately, the Federation still shows little vigor in applying this new policy. Its tendency is to move in only after the public prosecutors or crime investigators have already taken the lid off a cesspool, instead of seizing the initiative itself.*

IF LABOR is going to repair its relations with the rest of the public, it must make sure that it is running a solid organization of its own. The relationship between union leaders and union members has been undergoing a subtle change and cleavages may be developing that do not yet show in union elections or strike votes. The old notion that the union president ought to live on a scale roughly like that of the men he represents was ditched long ago. Now salaries of as much as $50,000 to $75,000 a year go to the heads of international unions, supplemented by generous expense accounts. Three AFL vice-presidents live in Florida homes built for them with union funds; the union-bought Cadillac is the standard conveyance for labor officials from business agents up; the head of one big union is a millionaire real estate operator.

It is only fair to point out that even the biggest union salaries and expense accounts

*Labor's insecurity in its post-election relations with industry and the government is heightened by the unresolved warfare between the AFL and the CIO and the internal conflicts that have beset the CIO since the deaths of Philip Murray and Allan S. Haywood. No one holds much real hope for organic unity between the two major branches of organized labor in the measurable future, and there is a strong chance that some of the key AFL affiliates or John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers will seek to capitalize on the divisions within the CIO. The AFL Teamsters, under the aggressive leadership of Dave Beck, already have taken over one large Minneapolis local from the CIO Electrical Workers, and the million-member United Steelworkers is restive over taking second place to Walter Reuther in the CIO. These tensions do not provide an ideal environment for constructive thought or sound action.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are peanuts by comparison with the pay taken home on the management side. Bringing union officials' salaries up to a level of modest luxury is not only a warranted recognition of the responsibility that goes with running a giant union; it also acts to protect union leaders against bribes, gifts, or favors from the employers' quarter. But too often the higher salaries, the routine and security of union office, have the effect of making union leaders slothful and alienating them from the problems of the men for whom they speak. This is especially apt to be true where a comfortable relation exists between the managers who speak for industry and the managers who speak for labor. The large number of unionists who are wont to gripe publicly about the shortcomings of their leaders indicates the need for an effort on the latter's part to draw closer again to the rank and file.

This is not the sole reason for believing that one of labor's most urgent tasks is to reorganize the organized. The real rush of people who came into the labor movement because they wanted to come in ended at least ten years ago. Since then total union membership has stood still at a level of about 15,000,000. This is less than one-third of our non-agricultural work force. The well-established unions have grown in membership, but much of it has been attributable to the operation of union shop and other compulsory membership requirements. Relatively few of the people who entered unions during World War II and in the period since the war have any real understanding of what unions are all about. They think of the union as an instrument for delivering them a regular raise in pay and for talking up in their behalf if they get in trouble with the boss. That is the beginning and end of it.

Surprisingly enough, unions have made almost no independent effort to build their own beachheads of middle-class support through the intensive organization of white-collar workers. Apart from the American Newspaper Guild, the entertainment unions, and a scattering of organization among store clerks, there is little union strength in this huge sector. The old Communist-dominated United Office and Professional Workers has largely disappeared, and there is little interest in either the AFL or CIO in doing anything to build a more wholesome replacement. A few years ago the AFL had almost solid representation in such Wall Street pillars as the Stock and Curb Exchanges, but this organization faded after an unsuccessful strike, and its erstwhile leader went off to try his hand at promoting labor-management harmony as a federal mediator in Cleveland.

PART of the reeducation task confronting organized labor lies in the necessity of broadening union horizons to encompass new services to member and to community, and part in a revision of bargaining objectives. Long exposure to government economic controls has rusted the bargaining apparatus; it has also brought a great increase in the use of mechanical mileposts for establishing whether wages should go up or down. Now labor is casting about for ways to banish the slide rule from the negotiating table and get back to the old unscientific basis of fixing wages through an economic free-for-all. Unless some sensible ground rules are set up, this can prove a costly and destructive process for the rest of us.

Cost-of-living escalator provisions have lost their popularity with labor now that the consumer price index shows signs of leveling off, but they will speedily return to favor if the elimination of controls or a worsening of the international picture causes a sharp new rise in prices. Industry has resisted general application of the General Motors idea of giving workers an annual pay rise of 2 or 2½ per cent to compensate for the over-all rise in the nation's productivity, but the idea gets into most major contracts, directly or indirectly, and operates to insure a steady rise of 4 or 5 cents a year in hourly wages. The trouble with both the cost-of-living and the productivity approach from labor's point of view

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is that even when it operates to pull wages up, it tends to make the entire process too automatic and thus to diminish the importance of the union in its members' eyes.

This is especially disturbing because there are already too many factors that bind the worker closer to his company than to his union. Union seniority programs have had the effect of giving workers a bigger stake in their jobs the longer they stay on the payroll of the same employer. Now, especially in the mass production industries, pension and welfare benefits are contingent on the worker's survival as an employee and the company's survival as a profitable enterprise. Here again is a relation that makes it urgent that labor see to it that we do not slide into a depression that shakes millions loose from their jobs, their seniority, and an important chunk of their security against the hazards of old age and ill health.

To achieve a continued rise in living standards and in employment opportunities, labor will have to shoulder a twofold responsibility. It will have to cooperate with industry in assuring the most efficient performance of our fantastically productive industrial machine. That entails not only a greater receptivity to improvements in machinery and the scrapping of outmoded equipment, but also a more diligent mutual effort to curb strikes by voluntary means. The inescapable effect of strikes of the frequency, scope, and duration of those the country underwent in 1946, 1949, and again last year, is to reduce the size of the economic pie to be cut up, and thus destroy the basis for improved living standards by fighting over how they should be apportioned.

But stepping up production is only half the task. The other and equally important assignment for labor is to come up with plans for improving our system of distribution to guarantee that the market will not become glutted with goods people could use but cannot afford to buy. On the ability to avoid such a calamity, especially when we stop diverting 15 per cent or more of our total effort into military equipment, depends our whole effort to convince the rest of the world that we know how to use freedom for the benefit of all the people.

THE area in which the real battle is likely to be fought lies in labor's effort to obtain a larger voice in the distribution of the fruits of our economy. That is why it is so imperative for labor to convince the government and the people, who in the ultimate sense are the government, that it really puts the interests of the community first. There is reason to hope that labor, however much bloated with the years of prosperity and White House favor, will be equal to this challenge. In George Meany and Walter Reuther, the AFL and CIO have vigorous new leaders. It is up to them and their associates to produce a program that will restore public faith in the wisdom and social-mindedness of our unions.

To do it they will have to shake off the complacency that comes with high employment, high wages, and convincing indications that the new administration has no ax out for labor. The ideas of Samuel Gompers and the business unionists of his generation have never been more firmly entrenched. What's more, these ideas are paying off more handsomely than ever. It is hard to feel that there is any necessity for thinking under such circumstances, but if the painful effort is put off too long the chance for a constructive effort to bulwark our economic security may be lost. Unions have come a long way since 1881; it is time their thinking caught up with the responsibility that has been forced upon them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BLACK AND WHITE UNITE....

A Story

MARVIN ELKOFF

A MOMENT before, her chirping, scurrying voice had called the meeting to order with: "All right, Comrades and kiddies, to work we must go!" And now she was reading the agenda, noting that the "educational" for the evening would be on "Negro Revolts" with an intensity of tone more appropriate to the announcement that a Negro revolt would, in fact, occur that night. As she spoke, her slender torso swiveled steadily on a great swell of hips and legs; often, when she was through, her chair would have moved a full foot away from where it had been.

Her face was round, puffy, and, speaking or not, a bright pink, as if she'd just come out of a steam bath.

Ben disliked her more each time he saw her at one of these weekly branch meetings, disliked her most of all because she made him feel the way he had when he was still outside the movement, addicted to condemning and contemning and thereby lost to the large affirmations of the party. He had joined this Harlem branch of the Communist party only six weeks before.

He felt Betty was always hidden some place among her thoughts while her speech ran off by rote. Only when she was silent —as a few minutes later, the agenda read, business transacted, dues collected, she sat behind a scarred old table awaiting the return of order—did she seem all of a piece. Her thoughts fidgeted with a nude impatience behind her slightly bulging eyes, like a chorus line visible in the wings. But when the room was silent they danced out to the tune of sober folksiness as she prepared to introduce the young Negro girl sitting beside her who was to deliver the "educational." Betty described the importance of such a discussion at this time when the people were on the march but when the forces of reaction were also girding for battle, when the hour of crisis was fast approaching but when the party and its allies were supplying the necessary leadership—constantly balancing hope and fear, optimism and desperation, to the point where it was hard to know whether the party was on the brink of victory or defeat. She was ending with a final affirmation when the clip-clip of hard leather heels echoed at the empty rear of the hall.

IT WAS a Negro named Barnett; he was wearing riding boots and jodhpurs so freshly pressed they seemed to spring out elastically from the knee; his white shirt was equally stiff and fresh, but tieless, and the cuffs were folded evenly below the elbow. No one ever questioned this outfit, which he so frequently assumed in the evening; it was not even gossiped about.

Reaching the last row of chairs, he put one foot up on a seat and leaned forward. He let a smile show beneath his closely trimmed mustache and waited, a self-conscious magnet, for the attention of the branch to be pulled inevitably toward him. His face was square and big-featured, but constantly arched with suavity.

It appeared that everyone in the branch but Betty knew there was antagonism between Barnett and her. She just raised her eyes perkily, as if she could not wait to hear what he had to say. The members looked from one to the other, as in one of those cowboy pictures when the marshal and the

---

MARVIN ELKOFF was born in Philadelphia in 1926, and holds a B.A. from New York University. He is on the editorial staff of a trade daily; this is his first published story.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

outlaw meet in a saloon. They all knew that anybody else behaving like Barnett would have been brought up on charges and penalized in some way. An influential union leader, well known as a Communist, he nevertheless seldom came to a branch meeting. He did not always make an entrance like this, but he did generally come late; and he would sit in a conspicuously empty part of the room. Often he'd leave before the meeting was over. (When others left early it was said they were "pulling a Barnett.") Some thought he was envious at not being organizer; others thought he didn't want the party to get its hands on his union power—and it was a fact that he had not recruited anyone from the union, with all his prestige. Others felt he was just too much of a ladies' man. He'd have two or three affairs a year and always with the kind of flashy girl who had no relation to his politics, and at the beginning of each affair he'd drop out of sight for six or seven weeks.

He waited there at the back of the room until a silence had come and begun to wilt under a new stir. Then he said, in the sly, done-for-effect manner he said most everything, this time expressing an indulgent contempt, "Don't all you serious people know Joe is fightin' tonight?"

Conversations sprang up anarchically in all parts of the room. Betty's gaze appeared to leap at every swell of noise. "You bet we do!" she chirped out suddenly.

Barnett dropped his booted leg to the floor with a petulant stamp. "Well, what'cha gonna do about it," he said, running the words into one another with affected crossness, "sit here like a bunch'a students while life just passes you right by?"

"Got something better to offer, Comrade B?" asked Betty.

"Would I be here if I didn't? I say you all come up to my place and listen to the fight. I'm havin' a little beer and pretzel party. I got m'car outside can take five or six of you. The rest can walk, it ain't far."

The alternatives were hurriedly rehearsed behind her glazed, inwardly concentrated eyes; suddenly her brows lifted, her mouth flew agape, her head teetered as if joy had struck her a blow. "I say three cheers for Comrade B!" she cried; stuffing her papers into her briefcase, she bounded down the aisle like a panicky kangaroo, caught her arm in Barnett's and pulled him off.

In the standard student manner, a hum of approval, claps and whistles were set off by Barnett's offer, and even before Betty bounded off some of the comrades had started moving. Only the prim, diligent-looking girl who was to deliver the "educational" remained seated. She did not seem quite able to believe in what was happening.

BARNETT's apartment was three dark, poorly furnished rooms in a tenement. Both of them—Barnett in his jodhpurs and his current girl friend, Matty, in her spiked heels, tight low-cut dress of bright blue, and gold earrings so huge they hung like thick braids on her shoulder—seemed out of place. Matty, who was waiting at the apartment when the comrades came, watched them enter with the faintly disgusted curiosity of one who is slumming but not amused. Her greetings were imperceptible. She lolled watchfully in the doorway between the bedroom and living room, to Ben's eyes so brimmingly sensual that a glance at her seemed one step short of assault. This was perhaps accentuated by the note of hidden, jeering provocation in her stance, at once daring and threatening assault. She looked at the visitors with an unabashed intentness, forcing their stares to back down first. Betty, however, walked straight over to Matty and said, "Wow! That's some dress, Matty! I'd give my right arm to be able to wear one like it. No wonder we don't see so much of Comrade B!"

Matty simply stared and Betty gave a little wiggle of appreciation, to indicate its sexiness sent shivers down her spine.

Though in the branch there were twice as many Negroes as whites, at Barnett's they were about evenly divided, for all the whites had come. The majority of the comrades sat on the floor in small, not completely

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

distinct groups, the conversations separating and flowing together against the background of dance music from the radio. Barnett moved among them, a quart bottle of beer in his fist, swinging the bottle in an elegant, high-swooping arc when he saw an upraised glass; the swoop would come to a timid aim at the bottom of the arc and he would say, in grave basso mimicry, "Use to was I could pour at a distance of twelve inches and make no suds, no suds whatever." Wherever he stopped the dip of his bottle set off a roll of laughter and rapid words, like the wand of a stage magician.

Ben sat off by himself against a wall. Betty sat opposite him on a sofa, the lower part of her body fleshily molding the arm and balancing the tensely perched upper half. Her eyes were jumping uncontrollably from one conversation to the next as they had during the uproar in the branch. She called out finally, her chirpiness almost breathless this time, "Well, I say Joe is gonna knock that Conn out in the first or second inning! What do you say, Comrade B?"

He was pouring beer with his back to her and he did not turn around. "Well now, Betty," he said, sucking in his cheeks in a sort of half-smile, "I'd say the first or second round, myself. But I didn't know you was a fight expert. In fact, I didn't know you was interested in fightin' at all."

"Lots of things you don't know about me, Comrade B!"

"I believe that! I just thought you was only interested in more . . . uh . . . weighty matters."

"Well, I'm not interested in boxing in general, just when Joe fights. And that's a weighty matter!" She now sent her gaze benignly from face to face, prompting discussion from the floor.

"Oh," he said, facing her, "so you really ain't no expert."

"Now don't tell me you have to be an expert to make predictions. Everybody knows Joe is gonna knock him out real quick. When do you think Joe's gonna do it, Comrade Jerry?"

So she started it around again, and each moment Ben felt more unbearably compromised by her, felt his whiteness as criminal an evidence of guilt as the striped clothes of a convict. Above all he had to declare his innocence and the only way was to interrupt at one point: "I was thinking Conn would win."

The room fell quiet. Someone asked how come the fight was so late in starting, didn't fights usually start earlier? Several comrades tried hurriedly to answer. But Betty laughed, "What do you think of this traitor here? Imagine a guy in our branch rooting for Conn!"

A blush swept his teary, allergic-eyed blondness. "I did not say I was rooting for Conn," he articulated with priggish belligerence. "I merely said I thought he would win."

He had said this mainly for Barnett, he realized, and now he looked to him for support. "Maybe he's in the wrong branch and don't know it," said Barnett. "Or maybe he just don't know nothin' about boxin'." Just then the fight announcements came on and Ben's furious question, "Which do you believe?" was lost under the roar of the arena crowd and the shuffle of attention in the room.

He was not angry simply in disappointment but because Barnett's remark had hinged on the same conversation that had led him to see Barnett as an ally. . . .

Before his first branch meeting Betty had been introducing him to his new comrades, and when she came to Barnett had thrown one arm around his waist, given a great squeeze and called him the "Romeo of the branch." He had winked at Ben over her shoulder and arched his brows with a kind of resigned disgust.

Later that evening he had sat down beside Ben and asked, with mock slyness, "Like our organizer?"

"She's not too bad, I guess."

"Yeah, not too bad, that's it. Just sort of a habit she's got rubbin' hips like that, like somebody told her forty, fifty years ago

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

throwin' a little sex around gets results and she been doin' it ever since. But she means well, and you got to have hard workers like her." He stopped, stared blandly at Ben with the vaguest glimmer of a smile, and then laughed very loudly. Ben could not make its meaning out, except he felt a certain liberty involved, a hint of freedom-giving insult. "You're a college boy from upstate, I hear," he went on. "Mind if I ask how come you come right down here to a Harlem branch? Ain't there some nice groups over at school?"

"What do you want to know that for? Unless you want my life story." How could he tell him he had joined this Harlem branch precisely because he *had* wanted to join a "nice" group at school?

"The good Lord save me from hearing life stories," he shuddered. "That ain't what I want. Thing is, sometimes I just get sort of curious about what some of us are doin' here. Know what I mean?"

Ben shook his head.

"Well, take this. You'd never meet a colored fella hated white people as much as my old man. Line'm up against the wall is all he wants to do. He believes in old Garvey, too. Whenever I come around I kid him about who he's goin' to vote for and he always has this routine he goes through. 'Son,' he says, 'what's the color of this candidate of yours?' 'White,' I says. Then he says, 'What's the color of a maggot?' and I say, 'White.' So then he says, 'Then why in hell you want me to vote for a maggot?'"

"I can see your father's a very logical man," said Ben. "But I don't see your point."

"Well, my point is, I keep thinkin', ain't I my daddy's boy? Ain't you your daddy's boy? Ain't she," he added, rocking his head toward Betty, "her daddy's girl? At least partly, anyway, ain't that so?"

A disconcerting seriousness had sounded in Barnett's words. "It makes things hard," Ben said.

"Harder than hard, man," he laughed, and then he called to someone and abruptly walked away. Ben had seen him only one other time before the fight, when they had merely said hello.

BEFORE the fight began Betty suddenly knelt beside Ben and whispered, "There's more than a fight at stake, you know. If you knew what Louis meant to the Negro masses you wouldn't have such a high and mighty impartial air."

"I simply said I thought Conn would win. And anyway, I wasn't talking to any masses, just to a dozen comrades."

She appeared to be really seeing him for the first time and unable to make out whether he was an idiot or a scoundrel. "Such opinions should be held privately under the circumstances," she said. "You don't have the right simply to utter pronouncements from your objective ivory tower. And even if you aren't capable of thinking politically—which is something we'll have to talk about one of these days—you can at least enter into the spirit of the occasion."

Ben ignored her. When he turned away he saw Matty watching him with undisguised distaste.

Until the ninth or tenth round the listeners weren't dismayed when Louis failed to knock Conn out and the white boxer went ahead on rounds. They were simply waiting, if a bit solemnly, for the inevitable. Matty was the first to grow nervous. She started pacing between the living room and the bedroom, slapping the door jamb when she passed, the way a cat twitches a stiffened tail. With each turn her long earrings lashed her neck, lay pasted there for a fraction of a second like an exotic necklace. By about the eleventh round she began to call out softly, as if talking to herself but not caring whether anyone heard, "Come on, Joe boy, knock that white man's head off." The comrades, rigidly faced toward the radio, pretended not to hear; again excepting Betty; she would call back, "Atta girl, Matty, you tell 'em!"

Ben sat with his head bent over, trying to give the impression that he was absorbed in the fight and really trying to keep from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seeing Betty. He wished that he might get away from her voice as well. As it was, the more it looked like Conn would win, the more alone he felt; the others seemed to be shifting their positions so they would not have to face him. And Barnett no longer worked at his duties as a host, but slumped cross-legged on the floor and slowly stroked his long, shiny boots as though to comfort them.

THE end came suddenly in the thirteenth round, but there was a moment after Conn was hit when the announcer's voice was covered by the crowd's roar. Cries in the room sprang back at the roar and Barnett and Matty both rushed to surround the radio as if to bully the good news out of it. When the announcer said Conn was down they clutched each other and when the count reached ten they hugged and Barnett lifted her and twirled her around so quickly her spiked-heel shoes flew into the bedroom.

Ben was for a moment aroused from his outcast state. But then Betty began bounding around the room, kissing everybody. And then Matty, now uncoupled, was staring at him, swaying on her bare feet, almost panting. She suddenly laughed with a wild heartiness that silenced the room and pointed at Ben. "Conn!" she shrieked, snapping her head forward as though the word were a solid object to be flung at his face.

From across the room, Barnett, glaring disapproval, stepped toward her, but she waved him away, seeming at once to scorn him and tell him there was nothing to worry about. But then, turning slowly into the bedroom, she stopped and beckoned to Ben. He stood up but did not move right away. Not that he was debating whether to follow her or not; he was just stilled for a moment by his own detachment and the palpable sense of the others' eyes all nudging at him like a dozen stethoscopes probing his intention. A very broad, square-shouldered boy who invariably caused people to repress a gasp when he turned sideways, being no thicker than a long novel, he walked into the bedroom with stiff strides and followed her to a large two-doored closet. With a quick, almost impassioned spreading of her arms, she opened both doors. Their inner sides were covered from edge to edge with photographs of Barnett with white girls, many of them in various stages of undress.

Ben caught only a glimpse of her look of pride and triumph, for Barnett had run in after them. Slamming the doors, he half threw, half shoved Matty across the bed and turned and grabbed Ben's forearm with an apologetic viciousness, as if angrier at what he had to do than at Ben himself. For a moment the two men stood that way, motionless. Then Ben wrenched his arm free, spinning Barnett against an end table. It wobbled, took a drunken stance on each of its four legs in succession and finally hit the floor with a terrific crash. There were murmurs in the next room, and a second later Betty bounded in.

The two men were standing close together, simply looking at the strewn floor in a sort of foolish stupor. But Betty charged between them, pushed Barnett back and dragged Ben after her into the other room, as a teacher, at once losing and taking control, no longer caring about her dignity or the other children, will eject an offender from her class. Ben did not struggle, was not even thinking of her but of his action the moment before, that he had never had so vivid and honest a sense of himself, that he had never liked Barnett or himself quite so much. When she turned to face him at the door, he merely gazed at her in numb astonishment. "You damn fool," she hissed up close against his ear, "you can't fight with a Negro!"

BEN'S expulsion from the party as a Jim Crow *agent provocateur* was cut and dried, though he had no inkling of it until he came to the following week's meeting. The sergeant-at-arms, blocking the doorway, jerked a thumb in his face, like an umpire, as he tried to enter.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ISRAEL'S LEFT REELS TO THE SHOCK OF "PRAGUE"

Chronicle of a Disillusionment

MARK ALEXANDER

TEL AVIV

RUMORS in Israel for months and weeks had the Slansky trial starting so many times before it actually did that it came almost as an anticlimax. Many Jews appeared to be among the accused, but nothing extraordinary was seen in that: there had been trials with Jews and trials without them before in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. Trials and purges had come to be accepted as things integral to the Soviet order, the way economic crises are regarded as inherent in the capitalist system by orthodox Marxists. True, articles had been written and speeches made in Israel about the growth of a new form of anti-Semitism in East Europe, but this had been generally considered an exaggeration—if not worse. Even if it was true that Jews could no longer enter the Soviet diplomatic service or become generals in the Soviet army—so what? It had been that way under the czars too.

But Mapam, the pro-Soviet party which in 1951 won 15 out of 120 seats in the general election, had a special reason for concern: ten months before, Mordecai Oren, one of the leaders of the extreme left wing of that party, had been arrested in Prague. According to persistent rumors, he was to figure in the forthcoming trial as the missing link between the Czech "traitors" and Zionism. There was serious disquiet in Mizra, Oren's home kibbutz, and among a few of the more thoughtful Mapam leaders, who grasped the implications of his arrest before their more optimistic comrades did. But even they were not prepared for anything extreme; there had been somewhat similar occurrences in the past, and these had been forgotten in time.

In the Kostov trial in Bulgaria in 1949, Mark Nahimson, a lawyer, had been named as an important British Intelligence agent in the Balkans who had established conspiratorial connections with Stefanov, former Bulgarian Finance Minister and one of the chief defendants. It is not unlikely that the secret police chiefs who prepared this trial believed that Nahimson, like so many other European Jews, had been killed in the course of the war; but Nahimson, his name changed to Nahumi, had meanwhile become foreign editor of *Al Hamishmar*, the Mapam daily in Tel Aviv. Though his naming in the Sofia trial caused a sensation, Nahimson himself did not react. Three years later this "British spy" was still functioning on the board of the Mapam paper, and still making speeches at meetings of the Israeli-Soviet League that were duly reported in the Communist press, which apparently saw nothing wrong in giving publicity to a British Intelligence agent.

BUT on this particular *erev Shabbat* afternoon, November 21, news of a different kind began to arrive in Israel. The Prague trial had started the day before, and it had been noted that the indictment mentioned the Jewish origins of most of the accused and the fact that they had "protected" Jewish organizations. On the 21st it was discovered that the Czech radio was broadcasting the court proceedings for several hours straight every day. Not a few Jews from Czechoslovakia are in Israel, and the number of those who understand Czech—through Polish or some other Slavonic language—is even larger. Listening to the Prague radio became for a while the favorite pastime of

---

IN LAST month's COMMENTARY it was reported how the grass-roots Israelis of the Ain Harod collective colony, most of whose members had strong ideological or sentimental ties with the "great Russian experiment," took the news of the Prague trial and the arrest of the Moscow physicians. This month MARK ALEXANDER gives us a broader view of the Israeli left's reaction to the new anti-Semitic campaign behind the Iron Curtain, describing, step by step, the various contortions the hierarchy of the minority fellow-traveling Mapam party has gone through as the evidence of Soviet Jew-baiting piled up during the past months. "Mark Alexander" is the pseudonym of a young journalist who lives in Israel and specializes in Middle Eastern affairs. He has been a frequent contributor to these pages.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a good part of the Israeli population, while lesser linguists turned to Kol Israel, the Israeli broadcasting station, for information.

By *Shabbat,* the 22nd, the news was sensational—and very bad. Everything pointed to the fact that an official attempt was being made by a Communist regime to exploit anti-Semitism—to divert attention from domestic troubles, or for some other reason. Not a single one of the defendants had been a Zionist; most of them had actually fought Zionism bitterly for years. It became clear that "Zionist" was being used as a synonym for "Jew." Though some Jewish Communists refused to believe this, their non-Jewish comrades, in Israel and elsewhere, were much quicker to grasp the new party line.

Large crowds pressed around the radios in cafés and restaurants, and in the dining halls of the kibbutzim. The latest news from Prague became the sole topic of conversation. By eight or nine on Sunday morning, and on subsequent days, most newspapers were sold out.

The first official comment on the trial came from Kol Israel station on Saturday, the third day of the trial; the commentator pointed out the striking resemblance between the accusations made against "world Jewry" in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and the charges made at Prague. This frank comparison was a far cry, indeed, from the usual restraint shown in official Israeli reactions to Soviet events, and it became obvious as the day passed that citizens of Israel looked to their government for an unambiguous answer to this new attack on the Jews.

PUBLIC interest was also focused, as could be expected, on the reactions of Mapam and the Communists. *Al Hamishmar,* the Mapam paper, stated editorially on Sunday that "the accusations leveled at the Prague trial against one of our members, Mr. M. Oren, and against Zionism, have caused widespread astonishment among those faithful to pioneering Zionism and revolutionary socialism. Mapam, which considers itself part of the world revolutionary camp, and supports without reservation the socialist states and People's Democracies in their struggle against internal and external enemies, cannot accept in any way the tenor of the things said against Oren at the trial of Slansky and his associates. We do not doubt the socialist and revolutionary loyalty of Mr. Oren and his deep friendship for the socialist countries. If the first and incomplete versions that have reached us over the radio are true, then we are facing a serious attempt to smear an innocent man and the liberation movement of a persecuted people deserving of favorable treatment and sympathy from the builders of the new world."

This was on Sunday, and Mapam did not have long to wait for completer versions of the charges against Oren. He appeared in the Prague courtroom in person and confessed to having spied for the British Intelligence Service ever since 1934. The Prague radio announcer described Oren as an international criminal who looked like an apache. This made it somewhat difficult for Mapam to insist on their theory of some inexplicable "misfortune" that had befallen their comrade, and during most of the week the Mapam leaders were unavailable for comment—they simply could not be reached. But it was at least known that they were utterly bewildered: the "astonishment" mentioned in *Al Hamishmar's* editorial was one of the understatements of the century.

A meeting of Mapam's central committee was held, at which, by a majority of twenty-five, it was voted to follow a policy calling for Oren's immediate release and undertaking a partial defense of the Jews, the Zionist movement, and Israel. At the same time Mapam was to reaffirm its support of the Communist world and its solidarity with it against the "anti-Communist propaganda wave" called forth by the Prague trial. A minority of nine, however, demanded total identification with the new Cominform line, an all-out attack on the Zionist movement, a justification of Oren's arrest on the basis of his own "voluntary" evidence, and a support of the anti-Semitic attacks—or rather a denial of the allegations that these actually were anti-Semitic.

During the same week Mapam issued two further statements of policy: in the Knesset, on Tuesday, November 26, Peri, a Mapam deputy, read aloud a short prepared statement directed mainly against the "anti-Communist smear campaign," and an *Al Hamishmar* editorial criticized *Rude Pravo,* the main Czech Communist party paper, for having failed in its wholesale condemnation of the Jewish liberation movement to differentiate between the "progressive" and "reactionary" forces that are contained, the editorial insisted, in every national movement.

But Mapam's chief initial reaction was to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

try to defend itself against Mapai, Israel's strongly anti-Communist labor party and the biggest single political force in the country. Mapam had not yet digested the full implications of the Prague trial, and still saw the chief threat as an anti-Mapam "crusade" by Mapai and other Israeli parties. Its fifteen deputies sat silent in the Knesset, though everybody was expecting some official explanation of their position. "You will not intimidate us!" shouted one of their moderates, and this was typical of how much at sea they all were. Perhaps the speeches and articles against them were too sharply personal; perhaps some of their opponents overdid the I-told-you-so's; perhaps a hand of reconciliation ought to have been extended in a dramatic gesture. Yet it is hard to assume that the result would have been much different. Mapam had been shaken to its spiritual foundations.

Meanwhile the names of two more prominent Mapam figures had been implicated in the Communist anti-Israel campaign. Rafael Ben Shalom (Friedel), a member of Kibbutz Artzi, one of the heroes of the Slovakian uprising in 1944, and first secretary of the Israel Legation in Prague in 1949, was called an American spy in the Prague trial—which he, in the safety of Israel, denied in a private statement. Y. Barzilai, a member of Kibbutz Negba and former Israeli Ambassador to Warsaw, was indirectly implicated in an official Polish note to the Israeli government asking for the recall of his successor as Ambassador to Poland.

In December Mapam convened to decide more fully what its reaction to Prague was to be. Its out-and-out pro-Stalinist wing, headed by Sneh and Riftin, was outvoted by 232 to 49. Sneh had welcomed the Prague trial as an important contribution to world peace: Czechoslovakia had been threatened by a Titoist *coup,* and Gottwald, or whoever directed his steps, had had to act accordingly. Sneh's views were set forth in a leading article destined for the party newspaper, but which the latter refused to print, whereupon Sneh circulated it privately. The article eventually found its way into the Mapai newspaper, and the Tel Aviv Communist sheet as well. Sneh did not in this article elaborate on the Jewish aspect of the Prague trial, nor did he mention Oren's name; anti-Semitism on the part of a Communist regime was a *contradictio in adjecto,* therefore unthinkable and *a priori* a lie, was his position.

EARLY in December Kibbutz Hameuhad (the organization of agricultural collectives whose inner struggles over the Prague development were described by Aleph V. Sherman in last month's COMMENTARY) held a meeting. Most of the speakers called for the expulsion of those who still defended the Prague trials. Even more important was a Kibbutz Artzi* meeting in Sarid, early in January 1953, at which it was decided to "purge" from central positions in the party's institutions all those who had voted with Dr. Sneh.

And on January 9 Sneh's group was for the first time openly charged with "deviations" in a lengthy article by Meir Ya'ari, the ideological leader of Hashomer Hatzair, in *Al Hamishmar.* Sneh's first "deviation," according to the writer, had been his denial of the anti-Jewish character of the Prague trial and his refusal to acknowledge that stress had been laid upon the Jewish origins of the defendants. Ya'ari rejected every effort to make a distinction between the Zionist movement as thoroughly reactionary, and an imaginary "Jewish national liberation movement." He maintained that Mapam was right in collaborating with "reformist" and "bourgeois" Zionists in the Executive of the Jewish Agency to promote immigration, land settlement, and *halutz* education, while at the same time opposing all "reactionary" trends in Zionism. He recalled that the deep ideological split between Communism and proletarian Zionism had never been bridged; he said further that, even if Mapam were to succeed in replacing the present government of Israel and in keeping her neutral between East and West, there would still be difficulties because the Jewish people were *sui generis,* dispersed in the East as well as the West, and therefore an easy target for suspicion. Ya'ari closed his article with a stern warning to Sneh and his friends not to play the role of "revolutionaries" in a "non-revolutionary party," and to recant their "deviations."

But the situation was not so unfavorable to Sneh as it appeared. In the first place, Mapam's rejection of the Prague trial was not entirely unambiguous. In the second place, it

*Kibbutz Artzi is, like Kibbutz Hameuhad, a federation of agricultural collectives. The two together contribute the greater portion of the membership of Mapam. Kibbutz Artzi is organized politically as Hashomer Hatzair, one of three parties that originally came together some years ago to create Mapam.—ED.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mattered little to him that Ya'ari and his friends in Hashomer Hatzair were angry. Would he not be remembered by the Cominform for his brave stand in a difficult time? And was not his position much more logical ideologically as long as Mapam's majority refused, as they did, to renounce the basic tenets of Stalinism?

THE Communists, too, were visibly shaken by Prague. Their newspaper did not react definitely for almost a week—that is, it didn't discuss any of the details of the trial, but contented itself with crying out against the "yellow hyenas" that were launching an anti-Communist drive, and welcomed the trial in general terms. But after ten days or so, following a report by one of their leaders, Wilner, to the party's central committee (Mikunis, the secretary-general of the Israeli Communist party, was away in Moscow), they began to go to work on the anti-Zionist, anti-Israeli, and anti-Jewish tasks set them by Prague, while still trying to deny that anything more than anti-Zionism was involved.

Mikunis, on his return from Moscow, declared in a meeting at Ramle that only on the ruins of Zionism could Communism be built in Israel. The Communist newspaper omitted that part of his speech, but it was given in *Al Hamishmar*. On the next day, in a special interview, Mikunis admitted that he had said what *Al Hamishmar* reported, but criticized the paper for printing a statement so obviously made off the record.

THE Prague trial dissipated for the time being that "neutralist" atmosphere which had infected Israel's political climate until then (as described by this author in "Israel's Communists and Fellow-Travelers" in the August 1952 COMMENTARY). The many unattached and largely unpolitical Israelis were, of course, more shocked than the "premature" anti-Communists, who had already predicted an anti-Semitic turn in East Europe. Exposed to both sides of the "argument," the neutrals had decided that the truth lay somewhere in the middle. Now all they could say was, "Who would ever have expected that! Didn't the Communists tell us over and over again that anti-Semitism was punished as a serious crime in the Soviet world?" I heard this a thousand times if I heard it once.

Many Israelis tried to rationalize the affair: perhaps the Communists wanted to make friends with Shishakly and Naguib. But this by itself did not make enough sense. The Mapam leaders and activists tried at all costs to avoid discussing Prague, but when driven into a corner they said that anti-Semitism was after all unthinkable under a Communist regime, and if facts showed otherwise, maybe the facts were wrong—it might be just a coincidence that eight of the eleven accused were Jews. But hadn't the prosecutor declared in so many words that the presence of so many Jews among the defendants was *not* accidental? The Communists had less squirming to do. "We've always been against Zionism," they said, "and it's against Zionism that Prague has now gone to war." This was a more logical line, but it was somewhat handicapped by the fact that, though eight of the Prague defendants were Jews, none was a Zionist. (And later, when news came of the arrest of the Moscow physicians, there was hardly any mention of Zionism.)

Both Mapam and the Communists tried in general to pass over the Prague trial as quickly as possible and divert attention to such issues as the Rosenberg case in America, the high cost of living, and the policies of Israel's new coalition government. The Communists called about a dozen public meetings on Prague, half of which were broken up by the public. Mapam called no such meetings at all. But the attempt to dodge a clear stand (not only on Prague but also on Zionism and Israel) made sense only on assumption that the issues raised by Prague were transient—that "this storm, too, would pass over," as *Al Hamishmar* put it very frankly and naively. But what if this should not be the case, what if Oren were brought to trial and implicated other Mapam leaders, and what if more anti-Jewish purges took place in other Communist countries? Publicly, at least, Mapam refused to consider such eventualities.

Then came news of the expulsion of the Israeli ambassadors to Prague and Warsaw; a new purge began in East Germany, with the flight of practically all Jewish community leaders there; and the Communist press attacked Bonn's reparations agreement with Israel. But the worst shock was the announcement from Moscow on January 13 of the arrest of the Jewish physicians and of the fantastic charges against them. The reaction was in most respects like that to Prague, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more intense. The Communists wholeheartedly defended the new anti-Jewish line, while maintaining that it contained no anti-Semitic intention whatsoever. Mapam said, after some hesitation, that this latest news was really "astonishing" and even "shocking," and that this attempt to "throw a dark shadow over the Jewish national movement must of course be rejected." However, continued *Al Hamishmar,* one should not draw hasty conclusions or become hysterical: recent developments were to be explained in the last resort as a result of growing world tension. And for the growth of world tension, as every Mapam follower knew, America, not the Soviet Union, was responsible.

It was all very well to go on shouting the old slogans about the impossibility of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, but the new facts were harder than ever to explain. The Communists were by now completely isolated; their Arab cells were hardly affected, but there was dissension in their Jewish ones, and slowly but unmistakably a trend away from the party began. Many Israelis had tried to believe that Prague was only an isolated incident, but after "Moscow" that hope had evaporated. All the false ideas and illusory notions about Stalinism that had been so popular in Israel since 1948 were now being destroyed. The Communists would never again get so favorable a hearing from any large proportion of Israelis.

THE fact was that "Prague" and "Moscow" hit home directly and even individually, more than any similar event in the past. "I'm not very much afraid of purges, the decisive thing is *who* is to be purged. If it's *me,* then it's of course something entirely different." This statement, by a leader of Mapam's pro-Zionist wing, S. Friedman, was fairly typical of the reaction of most Soviet sympathizers. Who could know the truth about Bukharin and Radek, Rajk and Kostov, in far-off countries? But Mordecai Oren and Rafi Ben Shalom had been their comrades only yesterday; if they were spies, then anybody could be one. But, of course, everyone knew that they were *not* spies. For those who knew Oren and Ben Shalom, the personal aspect seemed to be even more important than the charges against Zionism, Israel, and the Jews in general.

But if Oren was innocent, if his evidence was framed, what reason was there to exclude the possibility that Slansky and the others were in the same position? Was it only the fact, as Ben Gurion put it, that Slansky had the misfortune not to belong to Kibbutz Mizra? The Communists accused Mapam of sowing disbelief and confusion, and from their own point of view they were quite right. They were only arguing in accordance with the advice of that great master of totalitarian propaganda, Adolf Hitler: "As soon as one point is removed from the sphere of dogmatic certainty, the discussion may easily lead to endless debates and general confusion." In the end the Oren debate could only undermine the rank and file's confidence in Stalinism as a whole.

Privately, many—perhaps most—of the Israelis who defended Prague admitted that the confessions could not be taken at face value, and tried to find a more refined and sophisticated explanation: they upheld the accusations only in an abstract sense, while rejecting them literally. This was, of course, not an entirely novel procedure on the part of Soviet sympathizers. Nobody, however, could believe any longer in the absolute benefits of Stalinism; those who wanted to swallow Prague could say only that they thought the good in Stalinism outweighed the bad. Here the basic difference between Stalin's Communism and faiths with more solid moral standards became all too plain.

One had to differentiate, however, between the attitude of the Mapam leaders and that of the rank and file. The Sneh wing consists mainly of party functionaries, with perhaps a few hundred followers in the kibbutzim and Tel Aviv. Yet half of Mapam's Knesset representation and perhaps a majority of its party bureaucracy belonged to that wing before Prague. The predisposition to cynicism—and contempt for the "masses"—was patently much more frequent in Mapam's leadership than among its rank and file. The leaders of the Sneh wing said of Prague and Moscow: "Of course, we know it isn't true. But, of course, we have to justify it. That kind of propaganda is needed because the masses can't understand the niceties of deviation."

But the rank and file kept on asking: "How can we know the truth? Perhaps there are secrets that cannot be told?"

THERE was no mass exodus from Mapam or the Communist Maki after Prague. One or two Mapam intellectuals like Haim Guri, the fa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vorite poet of the younger generation, spoke out in public. Others could not afford the publicity; it was only the rank and file that could go to protest meetings or sign protest declarations.

But such shocks, we know from the past, generally have a cumulative and delayed effect. Very few left the Communist party after the first Moscow trials, but considerably more did so, and for apparently minor reasons, between the spring of 1938 and the summer of 1939. Outside observers were frequently baffled: why should one strain at a gnat after having swallowed camels for so many years? But leaving the Communist party is usually not the result of a single, sudden decision, but rather of a long process in the course of which several shocks have to be assimilated.

One should not belittle the dilemma of those whose faith in Stalin Communism had been shaken after Prague. In the last resort it was a question of choosing between right and wrong, but one's *whole* life was involved, and not just one sphere of it. For the man in the kibbutz such a political decision meant that he had to leave and go look elsewhere for a job, a house, friends. Even in town and village one's whole way of life would be affected by such a step, for pro-Stalinism has become a way of life everywhere.

THE Sneh-Riftin faction in Mapam is now called the "opportunist" wing of the party, which describes its position more accurately than any other name it ever bore. Its leaders believe in Stalinism in much the same way that many German intellectuals in the 1930's believed in the "forces that are rising," and therefore did not have much time to spare for the forces that were sinking. "Ideological" Stalinists could be shaken by Prague and Moscow, but not the believers in power and toughness —because Communist power was not necessarily affected by such episodes. Here, again, we face a striking resemblance between fascism and Stalinism as regards the attraction that power and success have for both the intellectual and non-intellectual. Sneh and his fellows will not be intellectually persuaded or emotionally shaken; only the failure of Stalinism will do that.

But most of the Mapam and many of the Maki rank and file haven't reached the point where brute success is their only consideration, as is shown by their response to Prague and Moscow. Soon they will be disconsolately looking for a new faith. A. Ofer, a well-known young Mapam writer, wrote in the Histadrut daily, *Davar*, that one ought not deprive the Mapam youth of their faith in the socialist and progressive character of the Soviet regime lest they cease to be idealists and lose faith in everything. Rarely has the situation of these young people been defined so straightforwardly. Their old faith is crumbling and they would be ready to accept a new one, but only if, like Stalinism, it was an all-embracing secular religion that answered every question. They are much more interested in security and peace of mind than in independent thinking or questing for the truth.

But where is the new faith to come from? Religion, as represented by ossified traditionalism, has no appeal for them, nor do they feel attracted by the crude chauvinism of the ultra-nationalist Herut. The General Zionists are "bad capitalists" and wicked "exploiters"; class interests would divide them from this party in any case. There remains Mapai with its democratic socialism, but where and when in the world was ever a younger generation enthusiastic about democratic socialism? In the weeks after Prague a drive was started to "save" the Mapam and Communist youth, but it is doubtful whether the missionaries will be able to give them what they are looking for.

II

IN THE small hours of the morning of January 29, the Mapam party council, in prolonged session in the Histadrut house in Petah Tikva, decided by a majority of 228 to 22 to expel Moshe Sneh, Adolf Berman—another Knesset deputy—and Pinhas Tubin, Tel Aviv municipal council member.

Before Prague and Moscow, Mapam had been divided roughly into two parts: Ahdut Avoda (Labor Unity) and Hasit Halikud (Unity Front). Ahdut Avoda, it was generally assumed, could count on the support of about 35 to 40 per cent of Mapam's membership; it stressed the Zionist character of Mapam and, while anti-Western and "neutralist," was sharply opposed to the Israeli Communist party and refused any form of collaboration with it.

Hasit Halikud had come into being as the strongest faction in Mapam during 1951 and 1952 through a coalition between the left socialist Hashomer Hatzair and an urban pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cominform group headed by Dr. Sneh. At first this new faction was dominated by the old leaders of Hashomer Hatzair—Meir Ya'ari, Ya'akov Hasan, Mordecai Bentov, and others. But gradually control passed into the hands of Sneh, who rode on the swelling tide of pro-Soviet sympathy.

On the eve of Prague, Sneh, as leader of its largest faction, was in virtual control of Mapam. But the first manifestations of Stalin's new anti-Jewish line reversed that trend. Ahdut Avoda demanded, in what amounted to an ultimatum, that the party publish a vigorous protest. Sneh countered with the demand that Mapam identify itself completely with the Prague and Moscow line and give up its Zionist character once and for all. But he had already lost his old majority in Hasit Halikud; most of the Hashomer Hatzair people had had their second thoughts in the interim. The Hashomer Hatzair leaders declared in their paper that they would not abandon *halutz* Zionism, that they would remain loyal to the "world of revolution and socialism," but that they would also defend the Jewish "national liberation movement" against attacks from any quarter.

THERE was little change through the second half of December and into January. Then Hasan and Ya'ari decided to act. The executive of Hashomer Hatzair was convened and the old principle of *"kollektiviut rayonit"*—the ideological unity of the kibbutzim—was put to test. After a discussion lasting for several days, it was decided to take a vote in all kibbutzim whose result would be binding on both majority and minority. The vote was held and Ya'ari and Hasan won a resounding majority of about 90 per cent, with only three kibbutzim, all of them young and small, giving a majority to Sneh—and these three "recanted" a few days afterward. The subsequent reshuffle of Mapam's leadership saw Sneh's relatively numerous supporters in the party machine supplanted by Ya'ari and Hasan men. And now Sneh was also deserted by Peri, Riftin, and Rubin—all three of them Knesset delegates—old supporters who were not ready, however, to follow him all the way into organizational merger with the Israeli Communist party Sneh's retort was to announce, on January 20, the formation of a new faction in Mapam: Hativat Hasmol, or Left Brigade.

The published program of this new group simply repeated the Communist program; the word "Zionism" appeared but once in its platform, and then only in connection with the urgent necessity of Mapam's leaving the Zionist executive. Even now Sneh still expected, apparently, that a third, or at least a quarter, of Mapam would join his faction and be prepared, if necessary, to walk out of the organization. Sneh's main hope, however, was for the support of the Arabs in Mapam, who were organized in a separate group, and for that of Hativa Zeira, the Mapam urban youth organization. At this point Ya'ari and Hasan agreed with Ahdut Avoda to expel the Snehists from Mapam. But first these were asked to return their Knesset mandates and dissolve their new faction. When they refused to comply, the leading members of their group were expelled by the Mapam central committee on January 26, the decision being reaffirmed by a ten-to-one majority of the party council three days later.

A week or two showed that it had been very unwise of Sneh to let his bluff be called. Only two of Mapam's Knesset deputies stuck by him—Adolf Berman, the colorless brother of Polish Communist leader Ya'akov Berman, was one of them. He had been elected to the Knesset more by mistake than anything else; his chief claim to fame lay in the fact that he had joined in the Communist attack on the Joint Distribution Committee at the very moment when he was asking for, and receiving, from that same organization a loan of several thousand dollars with which to buy a flat in Tel Aviv!

Sneh's other last-ditch supporter was Rustum Bustuni, a likable young Arab from Haifa, who had been elected to the Knesset on the Mapam ticket. But contrary to all expectations, most of the several hundred Arabs who constituted Hativa Aravit, the Arab section of Mapam, did not follow Bustuni. The Mapam urban youth section, Hativa Zeira, on the other hand, after having been disbanded by Mapam's leadership, decided ten days later, at its conference in Tel Aviv on February 7, to go along with Sneh under a new name, "Youth Group Yizhak Sadeh" (Sadeh, a founder of Palmach, had died in 1952).

Whereas in November 1952 Dr. Sneh had had virtual control of Mapam, by February he headed no more than a small splinter group that amounted to rather less than 10 per cent of Mapam's membership. And even this group

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has begun to disintegrate, with some of its members returning to Mapam, and others, in their impatience, abandoning Sneh and joining the Stalinists outright.

THE news, reaching Israel on February 8, that Sneh himself had been named in Prague as the former head of the "Zionist-Jewish intelligence service" was but one more blow to him; it began to look doubtful whether his group would be able to survive very long in its present form.

It would appear that Sneh actually expressed the wish to enter the Communist party, but he had little left to bargain with for a position of influence there, and the Communists showed no interest at all in a fusion. According to Cominform plans, Sneh was to head a fellow-traveling "national front" group that would be less rigidly Marxist than the Communists and able to attract elements beyond their own reach. Though not the slightest difference of opinion between Maki and Sneh's group could be discerned, *Kol Ha'am*, Maki's paper, tried for a while to invent "ideological" ones to justify Sneh's continued existence as a separate political force. But Sneh himself did not like the role assigned him one bit. His ambition was to be more, not less, of an orthodox Stalinist than Mikunis and Wilner. Besides, he had by now become so closely identified with the Communists as to be of little use to them merely as a "fellow-traveler." And another handicap was that he had also become the most hated man on the left in Israel—hated, not like Mikunis and Wilner, the Communist party's leaders, who had been, after all, anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist for years, but as a renegade.

Dr. Sneh has failed because the new anti-Semitic policy of the Soviet Union and her satellites puts him in an untenable position. He and a few other Israelis can continue to defend this policy, but they will appeal only to Jews with a very developed capacity for self-hatred. There have been such Jews in every generation: there were Jewish informers at many ritual murder trials, and Dr. Naumann's National German-Jewish Association in Berlin even hailed Hitler's victory in 1933. But Sneh cannot possibly hope to attract many people in Israel on such a basis.

IT OUGHT not be assumed that Mapam itself has wholly abandoned Stalinism as a result of Prague, Moscow, and the rest. On the contrary, it has been trying during the last month to demonstrate that it is much more truly Stalinist than either Sneh or Maki, and its main charge against the former is that he is really a Trotskyite and Titoist! Mapam affirms that it is as faithful as ever to the "world of revolution, peace, and progress," and that the present misunderstanding would somehow be cleared away if only they could state their case directly to the "leaders of world revolution." In all this the Mapamniks appear for the moment to be sincere, still fortified as they are by their past success in closing their eyes to Stalinist reality.

But what will happen when they are attacked for being bourgeois nationalists and enemies of the "world of revolution"—as they inevitably will be—by more authoritative spokesmen of Communism than Sneh or Mikunis? In the beginning, like the Yugoslavs in 1948, they will not dare to fight back. Then they will gradually begin to realize that their position is utterly hopeless as regards Moscow. Yet they will probably need even more time to wake up to this than the Yugoslavs did—for the simple reason that the latter had no alternative but the gallows in remaining loyal to Moscow, while Mapam, being farther away from the blessings of the MVD and the MGB, and not having yet succeeded in installing a "People's Democracy" in Israel, will be able to go on burying their heads in the safe Israeli sand.

The Communists' own crisis, meanwhile, though less spectacular than Mapam's, has been just as deep. Most of Maki's "cadres" have stayed intact, but the greater part of its "sympathizers" have walked out. As the party was based, politically, organizationally, and financially, on these "sympathizers," this has meant a serious setback and a much narrower basis of support. And even among its several hundred inner "cadres," breaches have appeared. The Israeli Communist party in February was in the position of a boxer who, after having already absorbed a lot of punishment, suddenly is hit hard from behind by his own manager.

III

THE Israeli government was taken unawares by the bomb explosion at the Soviet Legation in Tel Aviv, but it was even more surprised by the Kremlin's decision to break diplomatic relations. About forty members of the rabble-rousing Anti-Communist League were

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

immediately arrested, only to be released in a few days for lack of evidence. Moreover, these arrestees denied their guilt vehemently, which was in flat contradiction to terrorist tradition of former years when "credit" for such acts was always claimed by at least one organization.

The Israeli public believed, almost as one, that the bomb had been planted either by the Russians themselves, or by Maki's underground apparatus. But there are no facts whatever that point to the Communists. However, no evidence was found against the Anti-Communist League *despite an investigation,* while there was none against the Communists because the Israeli police did not question a single Communist functionary. Without question, a secret apparatus exists inside the Israeli Communist party, as inside every other Communist party. Thus, in January 1950, two of Maki's members were given long prison sentences for having military secrets in their possession. Nevertheless, the police, for unknown reasons, acted on the assumption that the bombing of the Legation had been done by self-styled anti-Communists.

The Communists drew encouragement from the government's reluctance to investigate their possible part in the bombing. They interpreted this as a sign of weakness, and saw a chance to stage a come-back. A few days later, in collaboration with Sneh's group, they launched a propaganda counter-offensive of unprecedented violence. In many meetings throughout the country they and their stooges accused the government itself of having organized the bombing. Mikunis, the party secretary, and other Communist speakers even ventured to utter threats—Ben Gurion and all his fellow "criminals" in the government would one day pay dearly for their crimes: they would be hanged by the feet like Mussolini, or incinerated like Hitler. As the government failed to react, Maki became even bolder. These tactics did not increase Maki's popularity, but it was again on the offensive and for the time being had regained its hold over its own members.

Before the bombing it had seemed as though *Kol Ha'am's* chief Tel Aviv correspondent, who had left the party in protest against Prague and Moscow, would be followed by many others in the cadres. But the government's indecision gave the party a new lease on life and many of its members were dissuaded, for the time being, from leaving.

MEANWHILE the polemics between Mapam and Dr. Sneh grew much fiercer. Renan has observed in his *Life of Jesus* that the bitterest quarrels in the world were those of Jews among themselves. Mapam was at a disadvantage from the first because it tried to out-do Sneh in Stalinist fervor, while calling a temporary truce with the Communists themselves (and blaming Ben Gurion, not Molotov, for the break with the USSR). Sneh, on the other hand, was not able to rally much support, at least not in the cities. Here and there, as in Lydda and Ramle, fist-fights between Snehists and Mapamniks for the possession of the local Mapam clubs were reported. And in Tel Aviv a new Israeli-Polish friendship league was founded that excluded Mapam—the first time it had received such treatment from an organization of that sort.

The number of Snehists in the younger kibbutzim is not large, and probably does not exceed two hundred; in the older ones it might be even less. But not a few kibbutzim, though unsympathetic to the Communists, have, out of old comradeship or for other personal reasons, refused to expel their Snehist minorities. At the same time some of Sneh's remaining friends in Mapam, like Ya'akov Riftin in the Knesset, have gone on publicly congratulating the Soviet regime for having thwarted "the diabolic intrigues of American imperialism" by the timely arrest of the Jewish doctors in Moscow. These speeches were not reported in the Mapam daily, but they found their way into the Communist newspaper, and the end result was the same. Obviously, Sneh supporters are still left in Mapam, some of them in the party's higher echelons, and they stay put for the sake of convenience or tactical reasons. But as tension between Mapam and the local Communists continues to mount their positions will become untenable.

ONE grotesque outcome of the bombing incident was the new rapprochement between Communists and Snehists on one side, and the religious parties on the other. A flirtation between these two apparently incompatible camps had started earlier, when the Communists succeeded in gathering without much effort the signatures of all but a very few of the Jerusalem rabbis and heads of *yeshivot* for a cabled petition to President Truman asking a pardon for the Rosenbergs. But why had these rabbis lent their names to an official

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Communist move instead of acting independently, as the two Chief Rabbis had done in their own appeal for a pardon? Why had they never intervened similarly when Jews were sentenced to death in the past, particularly in the political trials in Communist countries? And why, finally, did they lack the courage of their own convictions?—why was the whole matter shrouded in secrecy, why was *Kol Ha'am* the only newspaper to publicize their step?

In the weeks after the bomb incident new light was shed on the relations between the Communists and the religious parties. In February, one Rabbi Grossman, a member of the Orthodox lunatic-fringe group, Neturai Karta, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for having published a highly libellous leaflet on the Israeli army in which he attacked national service for girls (he was brought to court, incidentally, on a Mapam motion in the Knesset). The Israeli Communists saw their chance. If the Tudeh party in Persia could collaborate with Mulla Kashani, why couldn't they themselves cooperate with Neturai Karta? After all, Maki was the only non-Orthodox party to oppose national service for girls—as was logical enough, since they were against the national defense of Israel in general. And so Dr. Sneh was ordered to bring the matter up in the Knesset in the form of a joint protest by both Communists and extreme Orthodox parties.

Simultaneously, the religious parties' press began to publish strong criticism of the preparations for the all-Jewish congress that was to meet to protest against Communist anti-Semitism. The same papers also expressed violent opposition to the plan to bring Soviet anti-Semitism up at the UN. "We Jews do not use such methods," said *Hamodia,* the organ of Agudat Israel. "We resort to the means used by our ancestors to soften the hearts of their enemies." This was a reference to the *shtadlonim* of the 17th century, whose method of "softening the hearts of enemies" was to pay ransoms and bribes. *Hatzofe* (Hapoel Hamizrahi) and *Hakol* (extreme Aguda) attacked the all-Jewish protest meeting because "it will be anti-Soviet in its character." This had to be avoided by all means, because the only hope for Jews lay in appeasing the Soviets and abstaining from public criticism of them. At around the same time one of the leaders of Hapoel Hamizrahi, Y. Rafael, returning from Europe, declared that the flight of Jews from Eastern Germany and conditions there had been greatly exaggerated—though he had to admit in his next sentence that in a single month a higher percentage of Jews had left Eastern Germany than had emigrated from Nazi Germany in any whole year after 1933. An editorial in *Hatzofe* criticized the Histadrut leaders for trying to purge the trade unions of Communist influence. Ben Gurion, a series of whose articles was being published under a pseudonym in *Davar,* was told by the same paper to show restraint in his criticism of the Communists. Actually, the tenor of these articles was extremely moderate.

THE Communist press and Dr. Sneh were overjoyed at this support from such an unexpected quarter. They distributed their praise lavishly and called for a "new government" under Agudat Israel, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver (!), and political figures of a similar complexion. The identical demand, in identical words, naming Aguda, Dr. Silver, and Herut, was made in *Al Hamishmar,* the Mapam paper, on February 27. Aguda and Dr. Silver did not stand exactly on the left, to be sure, but they had shown a much more "positive" attitude than Mapai towards Soviet Russia, and that was all that counted now according to Maki, Dr. Sneh, and Mapam.

The importance of this flirtation between the Communists and the Orthodox parties should not be overrated, nevertheless. The innate timidity of the Orthodox leaders, their inability to understand the world around them, and their utter ignorance of things Soviet and Communist was not shared by most of their own followers, who took a position that was more steadfast as well as more realistic. The whole affair showed once more what important allies of Communism ignorance and pusillanimity are, and how they create fellow-travelers in the most unexpected quarters.

Nor has this ignorance and pusillanimity been confined to Orthodox circles. One or two editorials in the influential *Ha'aretz* betrayed a similar lack of understanding of things Soviet (though the same paper has also run anti-Communist articles); and the executive of the Progressive party passed a resolution calling for "more restraint" in the speeches of Israeli ministers. At the same time it has to be admitted that there was a measure of inconsistency in the statements of government spokesmen themselves.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett made several speeches in January and February that would, perhaps, have been more appropriate if given by someone in a less official position. After the Russian severance of diplomatic relations, on the other hand, the Israeli Foreign Service representatives revealed in some cases a surprising amount of timidity, as well as lack of candor. Typical of this was the statement that Dr. Elyashiv, former Israeli Minister to Moscow, made in Stockholm on his way home, to the effect that the Soviet regime made a distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism—the Stalin peace prize given to Ilya Ehrenburg being his main argument. Another example of this timidity was the refusal of the Israeli Legation in Paris to make any reply to a group of young non-Communist French writers who asked for information about the anti-Jewish campaign in the USSR.

To sum up, official and open anti-Semitism in Soviet Russia and her satellite states has seriously weakened Stalinism in Israel. Mapam has dissociated itself from the Prague trial at least by refusing to accept Oren's guilt or to support the Soviet charges against Jews. The party still tries to be more papal than the Cominform pope, but its inability to back the Communist line at every single point has compromised it irremediably in the eyes of Moscow. Dr. Sneh's Left Brigade remains a small and uninfluential group; its only hope lies in an early change in Russia's present attitude towards the Jews—in which case a large part of Mapam might cede and join his group. But such a development seems very unlikely; on the contrary, a further deterioration of the situation of the Jews in East Europe appears to be much more probable. Maki, the Communist party, has succeeded in holding on to most of its cadres, but it has lost most of its sympathizers in Israel.

It can be assumed that Malenkov will keep one or two Jews like Lazar Kaganovich near him, if only to show the world that his anti-Semitism is of a "new and higher type" (like the Soviet regime in general), and that the Communists in Israel will continue to deny the very existence of Soviet anti-Semitism. But even if the Soviet regime were to promulgate Nuremberg laws, some, at least, of Maki's cadres would continue to stay loyal, arguing, perhaps, that the Jews—including themselves—had to disappear in order to make way for something bigger and infinitely more important.

Future developments in Israel depend, in any case, on a variety of factors. If the Communists continue to enjoy their present unlimited freedom of action the chances are that they will concentrate more and more on the backward sections of the population, and that they will not suffer a major loss of influence. This does not mean that they should be oulawed, but only that democracy in Israel should be given the means to defend itself against its enemies, and that it need not grant the latter unlimited rights. Let us remember the Nazis under the Weimar republic.

Another important factor is, of course, American policy in the Middle East. If the Communists and the fellow-travelers can convince the public that Washington is going to "sell out" Israel and give one-sided support to the Arab states, then the Communists will be able at least to neutralize Israeli public opinion. Whatever Russia's attitude towards the Jews may be—they will then argue—we cannot afford an exclusively Washington orientation because we shall in that case have to pay the price eventually for American appeasement of Naguib, Shishakly, and the rest. This is Mapam's thesis right now, and it depends largely on Washington as to whether it will gain greater currency in the future.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

MADAME VISHNAK AND THE VICTROLA

The Romantic Life of the Artist

MORRIS FREEDMAN

MY MOTHER, who came to America when she was about sixteen, always talked of the home she ran away from on the border of Russia as a kind of sprawling, Chekhovian establishment. She gave the impression that her family and all her friends had been of the high intelligentsia, and her incessant conversation with me was of the Russian ballet, Nazimova, Chekhov, Gogol, and Tolstoy. She frequently took out books in Russian from the neighborhood library; and in our living room in the Bronx stood a Victrola, of the kind that had to be wound up before each playing, with records of Caruso, Galli-Curci, and Chaliapin. All of them came out, when played, in a rising and falling tinny screech. Although my mother always urged me to pay attention, I could never distinguish Galli-Curci from Caruso, but perhaps I didn't really try; my main interest was that little white dog on the inside of the lid cocking an ear to his master's voice.

Some years later, when I became aware on my own of the names that had been so constantly on my mother's lips, I saw that most of her talk had been pure fancy, or gossip. To her Nazimova was a dancer, and she knew all the details of Tolstoy's involved family life rather than any of his works. As for Nijinsky, whom I once mentioned, she had not heard of him. I remembered also that there was a record of Al Jolson, of all people, alongside the opera stars in the record cabinet underneath the Victrola's turntable. Then I realized that I had never seen her open any of the Russian books except for a glance or to riffle the pages, at which times her face wore a faraway, reminiscent smile. But if I have an awed sense of the glory of the artistic life, I owe it to her, and on one occasion her fantasy and reality coincided, offering me a startling glimpse of her bohemian gods at play.

I WAS about twelve or thirteen at the time, and we were living on Belmont Avenue, a dismal, narrow street of tenements and a cavernous garage. A block down the hill was Crotona Park bordered by Arthur Avenue. It was the early 30's then, and refugees from Hitler's Germany had just started settling in America. There arrived to live in a tiny black apartment on Arthur Avenue a former actress of the German and Palestinian stage. I don't remember her name, but it was something like Shulamith Vishnak, which is what I should like to call her now.

My mother, always friendly and garrulous, got to know Madame Vishnak, as she

---

SUBJECT for a Ph.D. thesis: why did operatic music monopolize the cultural horizons of the Jewish immigrant from East Europe up to about twenty years ago? In this genre sketch MORRIS FREEDMAN draws detail from the mysterious world about him in his boyhood, and offers us a freehand composite of a not often recorded side of Jewish life on the American scene. (Resemblances to actual individuals, living or dead, are, he reminds the reader, only coincidental.) Mr. Freedman was born in 1920 in New York City, and educated at Evander Childs High School and City College, where he majored in English—in which subject he is now taking his doctorate at Columbia University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

always referred to her, the first week she appeared in the park, wheeling a stroller. Madame Vishnak was a tall youngish woman with a full head of short reddish brown hair, and a very broad smile dividing her small chin from her two apple cheeks. She spoke with a heavy accent, and she was pockmarked. She had been a member of a repertory company which had toured Europe and Asia and was now waiting for a Broadway engagement. Occasionally, my mother and she exchanged a few words in Russian or Hebrew. To my mother, Madame Vishnak was straight out of an opera by Tolstoy, and our lives began to revolve about her.

I spent a good deal of time in the park with my mother and learned, perhaps not so baldly as I remember them now, the most personal things about Madame Vishnak. She wore no brassière, my mother once remarked half to herself, with a satisfied smile, while we were sitting alone on a bench. She went on to explain, as though I had asked, that this was the latest fashion of artists in Europe. Madame Vishnak's three-year-old girl was, according to my mother, illegitimate. And the Mr. Vishnak who lived with her, a jolly-faced, unprepossessing man, was not her husband at all but her impresario-lover, and not necessarily the father of her child.

MY MOTHER couldn't do enough for Madame Vishnak. She insisted on helping her with her shopping and cooking. But her most extravagant gesture was to offer Madame Vishnak the Victrola. Galli-Curci, Caruso, Chaliapin, and Jolson, she said, would mean so much more to Madame Vishnak than to us. Madame Vishnak was really very grateful for my mother's offer. She always maintained a charmingly aloof manner, but on this occasion she impetuously kissed my mother on the cheek. My mother, glowing, lost no time in carrying out her project.

That very afternoon, my brother, then ten or so, and I and a few of the other kids in the neighborhood played movers. My mother hurried us, for it was essential that the machine and records be transported before my father came home for supper; the Victrola was our most valuable piece of furniture. We managed in some way to maneuver without mishap the bulky, boxlike phonograph, which was almost as tall as I was, down the two flights in our apartment building and along the street to the top of the hill. Then, feeling quite important, we began rolling it down, front forward. Madame Vishnak was watching us at the bottom with some apprehension and waved to us once, but I waved back assuringly. Halfway down the hill, the Victrola teetered dangerously, and, though we managed to keep it upright, the cabinet doors flew open and the records spilled out, most of them cracking violently.

Enough records must have remained intact for the gift not to lose all its attractiveness. For, not long after, when the Vishnak ménage moved to an apartment on Central Park West, Madame Vishnak sent a warm letter to my mother in Russian inviting her and the family to visit the new establishment. My mother determined that I should go alone. Her decision not to take the whole family couldn't have had anything to do with my father's feelings about losing the phonograph, for he didn't become aware for two months or so that it was gone, and when he did he congratulated my mother for having got rid, as he put it, of the piece of junk.

I MADE my trip on a late Saturday afternoon, and went, as was the custom with my mother and her relatives and friends, without a telephone call or a note to say I was coming. The visit meant a great deal to me. It was my first actual entry into the world my mother had talked so much about, and I was vividly anticipating, on the long and involved subway ride from the Bronx, a sumptuous, operatic-like reception. When I walked up one of the quiet brownstone-lined streets toward the rich openness of Central Park, I felt sure my dream was being fulfilled.

The first tinge of disillusion came as I stopped beneath the tattered canopy of the building. The elevator operator was a small dirty man who spat contemptuously when I asked for the floor, and the elevator itself was a wreck. I rang the bell of the Vishnak apartment, my face frozen in a smile. I could hear all sorts of noises from inside. Mr. Vishnak opened the door, and I squinted slightly and raised my eyebrows, putting

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what I hoped was a confidential man-of-the-world note into my smile. He was wearing an embroidered silk Russian blouse, and his face was flushed. "Yes?" he asked, not recognizing me. After I blandly explained my business, he stood there stunned, shrugged his shoulders, and yelled for Shulamith. "Wait here," he said, and returned inside.

Madame Vishnak was much more hospitable. She had on a turtle-neck sweater (over a brassière), and she greeted me warmly, bending forward to kiss me on the forehead and rumple my hair. Then she swept me into the huge apartment, down a long dark hall, past a great many doors, and into a large well-lighted room facing the park. A party was going on. The women were dressed in sweaters and the men in sport shirts, and all of them seemed to be smoking cigarettes in long holders and sipping from small glasses. There were in the room a few upholstered chairs with the stuffing coming out in spots, two low sofas covered with green and purple throws, and perhaps a hundred small pillows of all colors scattered everywhere. The women, bright and continually tinkling with laughter, were draped over the men, in the chairs, on the sofas, and along the pillows on the uneven floor. Through the laughter and the foreign chatter, I heard a familiar noise. In a corner was the Victrola, playing a popular number as tinnily as ever, something about what kind of noise annoys an oyster.

Madame Vishnak gave me a drink to hold and sat down on a straight-backed plain kitchen chair. She put me on her knees. "Well, darling, tell me how is your little mother?" she said, pronouncing her words like Gregory Ratoff. "And have you finally decided to break away from home? Take a little drink. It's good for you." I sat on her lap as rigid as a West Point cadet on Saturday inspection. I tasted the liquid, and while I had to sputter it out, I did so as genteelly as possible. She talked to me so about a half-hour, dropping Russian phrases, introducing me to some of the women there, all of whom had great red smiling mouths and phenomenally white, regular teeth. A few bent down to give me a hug and a kiss.

I finally bounced off her lap and said I had to leave. "That's too bad," she said, and, her arm around my shoulder, led me to the door. There she gave me a kiss right on my mouth, simultaneously terrifying and pleasing me. "If you see your mother sometimes, send her my regards. Goodbye. Come any time, my little beauty." She was as happily drunk as I was ever to see anyone.

My mother expected me to stay for supper at the Vishnaks, and so I had to spend several hours downtown. I had fifteen cents, and I bought a frankfurter and a bag of popcorn and wandered through Central Park and down to Times Square, where I finally took the subway home.

MY MOTHER was waiting in front of the house for me, and she hurried me up and into the kitchen so that I could tell her privately of the details of my visit. My father was in the living room. I let her questions guide my answers, and I think I was able to fulfill all her expectations, including some of those she couldn't bring herself even to hint at, however delicately. I was able to assure her that the Central Park West domicile was as romantically illicit as anything on the Metropolitan Opera stage. I told only one outright lie, that while I was there the Victrola played a Caruso aria from *The Pearl Fishers*, a favorite of my mother's. I remember easing my conscience by thinking that, after all, oysters were involved in both selections.

When I was in bed, ready to go to sleep, she came in and sat down next to me. She was smiling and had tears in her eyes. "You had such a wonderful day," she said. "You must go there often. It is too late for me to live such a life."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CEDARS OF LEBANON

LETTER TO HIS TRANSLATOR

MAIMONIDES

Moses son of Maimon, called Maimonides or Maimuni and also Rambam, born in Cordova, Spain, in 1135, was the greatest Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages and a renowned physician. He is the author of a number of classic works of Jewish faith and philosophy, among them the Mishneh Torah, a codification of Jewish law; the Thirteen Articles of the Jewish faith; and the great philosophical treatise, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Moreh Nebukim).

But Maimonides was also a prodigious letter-writer, receiving and answering queries from Jews the world over; the great intellectual authority he exercised over the Jewry of his day was owing as much to his indefatigable epistolary labors as to his books. Maimonides' skill in answering learned and legal questions was unsurpassed; some of his Responsa (as such replies are called) have the character of a whole treatise. However, he was no dry-as-dust scholar in his correspondence, but a warm and personal voice that comforted, strengthened, and exalted the spirits of the Jews to whom he wrote. "Through him letter-writing became a source of inspiration for the Jewish people, of assistance in their spiritual need," writes Franz Kohler in the introduction to his recently published *A Treasury of Jewish Letters.*

The letter given here is to the Provençal scholar Samuel ibn Tibbon, who was preparing a translation into Hebrew of the Arabic text of *The Guide of the Perplexed* and asked Maimonides' help on certain knotty points. Maimonides' reply is full of charm and candor, telling us something not only about the physician, grammarian, and philosopher, but also the man.

This letter is taken from *A Treasury of Jewish Letters,* edited by Franz Kohler and published by Farrar, Straus and Young; it is with the kind permission of the publishers that we print it here.—Ed.

"A MAN shall be commended according to his wisdom" [Prov. 12:8].

All the letters of the worthy scholar and excellent sage, R. Samuel son of the learned R. Judah ibn Tibbon, the Sephardi, have duly reached me, Moses the son of Maimon, the Sephardi. Already many years ago the fame of the honored prince, the wise R. Judah, your father, had reached me; I have heard of his great learning and the elegance of his style, both in Arabic and Hebrew, through well-known and learned men of Granada, the sons of Alfakhar, and the aged R. Ibn Mosca. Also one of the learned men of Toledo came here and told me of his reputation. Likewise when the honored R. Meir, a disciple of R. Abraham, the son of R. David, the great Rabbi of Posquières, who had studied under the learned R. Abraham ibn Ezra, came to me, he [R. Meir] spoke concerning your father, and gave me an account of the works on grammar and other sciences he had translated. I did not, however, know that he had left a son. But when your letters in Hebrew and Arabic reached me, and I learned from them your clearness of mind and elegance of composition; when I read your remarks both on those passages in my *magnum opus,* the Moreh Nebukim, concerning the right signification of which you entertain doubt, and on those in which you have discovered errors made by the transcriber, then I said with the ancient poet:

Had they known his parentage, they would say,
The father's excellence has passed over to his son.

[*Cairo, 30 September 1199*]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Blessed be He who has bestowed His favor on your learned father and granted him such a son; and indeed not to him alone but to all wise men. For, in truth, unto us all a child has been born, unto us all a son has been given. This offspring of the righteous is a tree of life, a delight of our eyes and pleasant to look upon. I have already tasted of his fruit, and lo, it was sweet in my mouth even as honey [Ezek. 3:3].

All your questions were just, and all your conjectures with respect to the omission of a word, or words, were correct. At the end of this epistle, I explain everything in Arabic, and give you all the information you desire, and mention the works you should study or neglect. You are thoroughly fitted for the task of translation, because the Creator has given you an intelligent mind to "understand parables and their interpretation, the words of the wise and their difficult sayings." I discern from your remarks that you have thoroughly mastered the subject, and that its inmost meaning has become clear to you. I shall explain to you in Hebrew how you shall manage with the entire translation. "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser; be wise my son, and my heart also will rejoice" [Prov. 9:9].

Be assured that, when I saw the beauty of your style and noted the penetration of your intellect and that your lips utter knowledge clearly, I greatly rejoiced. I was surprised indeed to discover such talents, such a thirst for knowledge, such an acquaintance with Arabic (which I believe to be a partially corrupt dialect of Hebrew) displayed by one who has been born among "stammerers." I also admired your familiarity with the niceties of that language in abstruse subjects; this is indeed like a tender plant springing out of a dry ground. May the Lord enlighten your eyes with the light of His law, so that you may be of those that love Him, who are even as the sun when he goes forth in his strength. Amen.

The letters of your esteemed college, which God grant may ever increase in dignity and learning, reached me. I have carefully examined all the passages concerning the translation of which you entertain any doubt, and have looked into all those passages in which the transcriber has made any mistake, and into the various preliminary Propositions and Chapters which were not perfectly clear to you, and of which you sought elucidation.

Let me premise one rule. Whoever wishes to translate, and aims at rendering each word literally, and at the same time adheres slavishly to the order of words and sentences in the original, will meet with much difficulty; his rendering will be faulty and untrustworthy. This is not the right method. The translator should first try to grasp the sense of the passage thoroughly, and then state the author's intention with perfect clearness in the other language. This, however, cannot be done without changing the order of words, putting many words for one, or vice versa, and adding or taking away words, so that the subject may be perfectly intelligible in the language into which he translates. This method was followed by Honein Is'hak with the works of Galen, and by his son Is'hak with the works of Aristotle. It is for this reason that all their versions are so peculiarly lucid, and therefore we should study them to the exclusion of all others. Your distinguished college ought to adopt this rule in all the translations undertaken for those honored men and the heads of the congregation. And may God grant that the spread of knowledge among the other communities of Israel be promoted by such works.

I now proceed to reply to your questions *seriatim*, to explain all those points which need explanation, to give the correct reading according to which you may amend the faults in your copy, arranged in the order of your epistle and embracing the three books of my work. [Here follow various explanations which refer to the most difficult portion of the *Guide*.]

God knows that, in order to write this to you, I have escaped to a secluded spot, where people would not think to find me, sometimes leaning for support against the wall, sometimes lying down on account of my excessive weakness, for I have grown old and feeble.

But with respect to your wish to come here to me, I cannot but say how greatly your visit would delight me, for I truly long to commune with you, and would anticipate our meeting with even greater joy than you. Yet I must advise you not to expose yourself to the perils of the voyage, for, beyond

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seeing me, and my doing all I could to honor you, you would not derive any advantage from your visit. Do not expect to be able to confer with me on any scientific subject for even one hour, either by day or by night. For the following is my daily occupation:

I dwell at Mizr [Fostat] and the Sultan resides at Kahira [Cairo]; these two places are two Sabbath days' journey distant from each other. My duties to the Sultan are very heavy. I am obliged to visit him every day, early in the morning; and when he or any of his children, or any of the inmates of his harem, are indisposed, I dare not quit Kahira, but must stay during the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two royal officers fall sick, and I must attend to their healing. Hence, as a rule, I repair to Kahira very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to Mizr until the afternoon. Then I am almost dying with hunger.... I find the antechambers filled with people, both Jews and Gentiles, nobles and common people, judges and bailiffs, friends and foes—a mixed multitude who await the time of my return.

I dismount from my animal, wash my hands, go forth to my patients, and entreat them to bear with me while I partake of some slight refreshment, the only meal I take in the twenty-four hours. Then I go forth to attend to my patients, and write prescriptions and directions for their various ailments. Patients go in and out until nightfall, and sometimes even, I solemnly assure you, until two hours or more in the night.

I converse with and prescribe for them while lying down from sheer fatigue; and when night falls, I am so exhausted that I can scarcely speak.

In consequence of this, no Israelite can have any private interview with me, except on the Sabbath. On that day the whole congregation, or at least the majority of the members, come to me after the morning service, when I instruct them as to their proceedings during the whole week; we study together a little until noon, when they depart. Some of them return, and read with me after the afternoon service until evening prayers. In this manner I spend that day. I have here related to you only a part of what you would see if you were to visit me.

Now, when you have completed for our brethren the translation you have commenced, I beg that you will come to me, but not with the hope of deriving any advantage from your visit as regards your studies; for my time is, as I have shown you, excessively occupied.

Be careful not to study the works of Aristotle except with the help of his commentators, the commentary of Alexander, Themistius or Ibn Roshd.

As a general rule I may tell you, study only the works on logic composed by the learned Abunazar Alfarabi, for everything he has written is as fine flour. A man may indeed gain knowledge from his writings because he was a distinguished philosopher. So also Abubekr ben Alsaig was a great philosopher; all his writings are plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

The writings of Aristotle are the foundations upon which all these philosophical works are based, and, as I have said above, they can only be understood by the help of their commentaries.

But other works besides those here enumerated, such as the writings of Empedocles, Pythagoras, Hermes, and Porphyrius, all belong to ancient philosophy; it is not right to waste time upon them. He, Aristotle, indeed arrived at the highest summit of knowledge to which man can ascend, unless the emanation of the Divine Spirit be vouchsafed to him, so that he attain the stage of prophecy, above which there is no higher stage. And the works of Ibn Sina, although they contain searching investigations and subtle thoughts, do not come up to the writings of Alfarabi. Still, they are useful, and it is right that you should study them diligently. I have now indicated to you the works you should study, and to which you should devote your mind.

May your happiness, my son and pupil, increase, and salvation be granted to our afflicted people.

Written by Moses, the son of Maimon, the Sephardi, on the 8th of Tishri 1511, according to the Seleucid era.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ON THE HORIZON

PASSOVER ON THE MOUNTAIN

The Samaritans Celebrate the Festival

M. K. WANKOWICZ

THE road from Jerusalem down to the ancient Hebrew city of Shechem or Shem, now the town of Nablus (an Arabicized form of its Greek name, Neapolis, or "new city"), is beautiful and wild, running across lofty plateaus, between wild rocky hills which part from time to time to reveal an Arab village. As I make the journey in the beautiful Palestinian springtime, these clefts are brilliantly green, the olives on the brows of the hills stretch out on the skyline, the people you meet wear the robes of pre-Exilic days, the flocks of sheep clinging motionless to the rocks might well be the flocks of Laban.

To understand what being stoned to death was like, you must travel along such a road as that from Jerusalem to Nablus, and see the mighty torrent of rocks along the way. To realize what Biblical sunrises and sunsets were like, you must see the sun hanging quite close, all its brilliance dimmed and, like the moon in a low cloud, concealing the opening to some green valley.

ON THE slow journey, there is plenty of time for my mind to go back over the strange history of the Samaritans, whose ancient rite of the Passover we are travelling to witness.

When Moses died, and Joshua entered the Promised Land at the head of a horde of Israelites hardened by forty years of wandering in the wilderness, by battles with the Canaanites, the Gabonites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Hivites, and all the other peoples who got a taste of the sword of Israel; when kings buried in caves were dragged out and hanged on wayside trees, and cities were wiped out; when, manna having ceased to fall from heaven after they had crossed the Jordan, the Israelites had to live on the fruits of the land—then this harsh and raging brotherhood had to be taken in hand, the conquered lands had to be parceled out, and the rigorous provisions of the Mosaic law reinforced. And then, gathering the twelve tribes in Shem, Joshua set six of them on the mount called Gerizim, and six on the mount called Ebal. The priests stood in the middle, between the two mountains, and read aloud

---

TWENTY-FIVE hundred years ago the Samaritans embraced Judaism and at the same time cut themselves off from the Jews. Today the surviving remnant of this people, numbering only a few hundred, still maintain the religion and the rites which for them have remained unchanged, and which justify to them their right to consider themselves the true chosen of God. M. K. WANKOWICZ tells here of a visit to the Samaritans in 1943, when Palestine was still under the British Mandate, and of the impressive ancient ritual with which these men of antiquity annually celebrate the Passover. Mr. Wankowicz is a Polish writer now living in the United States. Among the twenty-odd volumes of his published work is a biography of Theodor Herzl, published in Tel Aviv, which is part of a longer work in progress growing out of the author's three-year stay in Palestine. Mr. Wankowicz is also planning a book on the Polish immigration to the United States.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the blessings and the curses. And with a loud "Amen" the six tribes standing on Mount Gerizim confirmed each blessing, and the six tribes standing on Mount Ebal confirmed each curse. Some kind of visible signal may have been given in each case, for the two mountains are large and the human voice could not carry so far. In any case it must have been a fascinating production.

Some five hundred years later the Babylonians overthrew the Temple of Solomon, and Jerusalem with it, drove the Jews to Babylon, and introduced Syrian settlers into Palestine; the result was a human amalgam that professed every possible kind of Eastern religion. But even so, a large number accepted the Mosaic law, and even called themselves *shomerim,* or "guards," a word later modified into Samaritans. And as Jerusalem pretty well no longer existed, the Samaritans considered it only right and proper to erect a new temple in the city which was the next largest in the land during the years of the Jewish exile, namely in Shem, later called Neapolis, then Nablus.

Then Cyrus came and conquered Babylon, and issued a kind of Balfour Declaration. But as it happened, the Jews had not been by any means so badly off in their Babylonian enslavement, and so it was chiefly the poor who returned; as the poor always do, they thought it must be better elsewhere than where they were, and they dreamed of Jerusalem, which their fathers described in terms similar to those used by Southerners after the Civil War: that it was a place of enormous wealth, and the only thing lacking was chicken's milk.

And then it was discovered that the Samaritans had made themselves comfortable in the land, that they had usurped the primacy of the capital with their Nablus, whereas these returned emigrants thought only of Jerusalem. This led to a clash. Ezra and Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple under siege conditions, with the Samaritans trying to prevent them; Sanballat, the leader of the Samaritans, mocked the Jews, saying: "What do these feeble Jews? will they restore at will? will they sacrifice? will they make an end this day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burned?" (Neh. 4:2).

Of those days Nehemiah wrote: "They that builded the wall and they that bore burdens laded themselves, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon; and the builders; every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the horn was by me" (Neh. 4:11-12).

A hundred times more difficult than the building of the Temple was the task of reviving the ancient Hebrew customs in all their purity. Mixed marriages were a great hindrance. Nehemiah thundered vehemently against the foreign wives; as he himself says, "cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair."

And so, some 2,500 years back, the Jews broke off relations with the Samaritans, who went their own somewhat different religious way. In 1943 only 206 Samaritans were left in all the world, a dozen or so in Jaffa and the rest in Nablus. All the later developments of Judaism as a religion left them untouched; thus they have remained a community of the Bible, observing the Mosaic law with unusual strictness, but knowing nothing of the Talmud.

In the year 70 C.E., when the Second Temple, the one built by Nehemiah and magnificently enlarged by Herod, king of Judah (the lower stones of the Wailing Wall are said to date from the days of Nehemiah), was overthrown, blood sacrifice of animals ceased among the Jews. For at that time their religion was centered in the Temple at Jerusalem, and the synagogues were not sanctified, but were ordinary houses in which the faithful gathered for common prayer. The Temple was to be rebuilt when the Messiah came. And then blood sacrifice would be renewed. During one Yom Kippur I talked in the street with the propagandist of some Christian sect; he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clutched Jews by their robes as they hurried to the synagogues and explained to them that repentance was worthless if not ransomed with blood; and as the blood sacrifice had been symbolically transferred to Christianity, he claimed it alone insured ransom from sin.

But the Samaritans have retained the blood sacrifice in an unchanged form right down to the present time. As we drive along the roads of Palestine and see a wooden plow drawn by an ass yoked with a cow or a camel, we think that nothing has changed here for three thousand years. As we sit in a shepherd's tent, we can be sure that in the time of Jesus guests were welcomed with the same ceremonial, and people wore the same kind of *abbais*.

I TRAVELED to Nablus in the Mandate days with an excursion of Sephardic workmen. We talked mainly in French: this was a survival from the days before the 1914-18 war, when the whole of the Levant was covered with a network of French schools.

Among those who went on the excursion was Ben Zvi, the chairman of the Va'ad Leumi, or Jewish National Council in Palestine—in a sense the then president of the Yishuv, and now the second president of Israel. Ben Zvi had been settled in Palestine for many years. He was a workman in a sense peculiar to Palestine, for he had gone to a university in Russia, and the First World War found him studying in Constantinople. Even so, his hands have dug many a ditch in Palestine.

When, as a representative of Palestine, he attended the coronation of George VI in London, he had to wear knee-breeches. This caused as much amusement among Jews as the Russian Jewish delegates at an early Zionist Congress had experienced when they saw Herzl, Nordau, and other Western Jews entering the hall in frock coats.

NABLUS lies in a valley surrounded by hills. The climb up the Mount of Blessing takes an hour of good going. This caused sorrow not so much to me as to the ass on which I triumphantly rode. We fell in line behind a solid throng of tourists hurrying upwards as fast as possible. For many years now tourists had been afraid of becoming separated from each other in this nest of Arab irredentism. Police patrols in armored cars constantly rode up and down the mountain. The Arabs I passed spat at me. And I spat back at them. They shouted at me, gutturally and rudely. I shouted back at them in my own language but with much rolling of r's. It is always windy on top of the mountain, and it was rather cold when I got there. I found Ben Zvi in the tent of the Samaritan high priest who presided over this miniature community.

The Samaritans go up and dwell on the mountain summit for all the ten days of Passover. The whole population, from the aged to the infants, abandon their hearths and homes on the appearance of the full moon, break off all their labors, and go and climb a mountain. There for ten days they live face to face with the Lord Most High, praying at sunrise and sunset on the edge of the mountain to the clouds that conceal the heat of the raging fires amid which the Terrible and Unpronounceable Name has His habitation.

Seated on his heels before us, in Eastern fashion, Hakohen Avraam ben Itzchak, the elder of the community, told the story of his nation in excellent Hebrew. Hebrew is the sacred language of the Samaritans too, as befits a people who live by the Bible. As with the Jews of the Levant, their daily tongue is Arabic. "We are the remnants of three Israelite tribes, the children of Jacob, may the Lord be with him," said Avraam.

I gazed at his Assyrian profile, and reflected on the Jewish assertion that the Samaritans are descended from Assyrian colonists; I looked at Ben Zvi, who had the face of a Russian intellectual; I recalled the pictures of Abel Pann, whose Biblical Israelites look like Avraam or like the swarthy twenty-year-old lad near him, the back of whose head was covered with thickly braided plaits. And I confessed myself to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be at a loss in this darkness of the centuries.

Of the 206 surviving Samaritans, 45 are *kohanim,* or priests, directly descended from Levi, the son of Jacob—may the Lord be with him. The others are descended from Ephraim and Manasseh—may the Lord be with them, too. While the pigtailed lad was serving us matzos as soft and moist as pancakes ("When we came up out of Egypt we didn't have any matzos," Avraam says ironically), I wondered what my late aunt would have said about such a pedigree; she had a mania for tracing her lineage back to the 14th century. But this lad with the pigtails could go right back to Levi, of the 14th century B.C.E.

Now the high priest of the Samaritans, Ab-Chisda-ben-Yakov-Hakohen-la-adat-ha-Shomrim, arrived. He had been called to this office on the death of his predecessor some weeks before my visit. He was a man of perhaps fifty, of a fine build, and dressed in Arab fashion. After exchanging greetings we went out of the tent. The *karban,* the blood sacrifice, was about to begin.

FROM early morning Samaritan youths dressed in white robes had been carrying from wells the water for the sacrifice. Wood and branches had been set afire in a round hole in the ground some ten feet deep. The Samaritan carpenters had prepared seven wooden spits. For the Lord commanded: "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household" (Ex. 12:3). And the entire nation of the Samaritans consists of seven families.

A crowd was already waiting on a rise in the ground. To one side we saw a great tub of hot water from which steam was ascending. Boughs were still being thrown on the white-hot fire called *tannur.* Pressing through the crowd, we saw a flat stone, the altar. All the forty-five descendants of Levi were standing in several rows before the stone, dressed in white sacrificial robes. A little apart was a small flock of seven male yearling lambs without spot or blemish. For some time they had been looked after with the utmost care, being washed in a spring every day.

The *imam*—the priest in charge of the service—began to intone a refrain that was taken up by the congregation. This same refrain was sung with the same intonation 2,500 years ago, in the days when the people swarmed up for the Passover from distant Galilee, from the mountains of Gilboa and the mountains of Gilead, and from the mountains of Haggoim and the hills of Judea and the valleys of Ezdrelon, Hayarden, Beitshan, and from the sands of Beersheba, and from around the castle of Lachish and from Aza. They had gone gaily, playing on tympani, blowing trumpets, each group preceded by a sacrificial ox with gilded and garlanded horns. Upwards of a hundred thousand people had gathered in Jerusalem in those days.

From time to time the singers made a gesture as though washing their faces from brow to chin. I have never seen this done in a Jewish service. Was it an Assyrian accretion, or some kind of pass for controlling the breath?

Just as cold and contemptuous legionnaires used to keep watch in a cordon between the columns of the Temple, their short swords drawn and gleaming, so now a policeman of the British Mandate government, the district commissioner, wearing a sheepskin of uncured hide, was comfortably seated on a rock and watching the ceremony.

There came a moment when the white-robed Samaritans forced their way past the singers and seized the lambs, dextrously fettered them, carried them to a small cleared spot near the tub of boiling water, laid the sacrificial lambs on their backs, and, with sleeves rolled up, raised their knives.

The high priest went to the altar and began to recite the appropriate text from the Bible. When he came to the verse from Exodus (12:6)—"And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk"—the knives flashed downward and buried themselves in the animals' throats.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The assembled people dipped bunches of hyssop in the blood, with which they would anoint the lintels of their houses and the brows of their children. The lambs were dressed at once, their entrails burnt, their skins soaked in boiling water and cleaned with knives. Then the carcasses were spitted and laid over the white-hot fire, which was then covered. They would be cooked after three hours.

WE WENT to the high priest's tent, where we were given tea, and more of the pancake-style matzos, and fried salted sheep's cheese.

It was time to return to reality. But the reality was none too pleasant. A Samaritan, a veterinary surgeon from Jaffa, was squatting on his heels in front of Ben Zvi, pestering him to persuade the Histadrut (the Jewish trade union organization) to give work to ten unemployed Samaritans. And he also wanted the Va'ad Leumi to support a Samaritan school. It had done so at one time. But during the *moraoth,* or Arab disturbances, the Samaritans had hastened to make declarations disowning Jewry. "What were we to do, living as we were in Nablus surrounded by Arabs? Allow ourselves to be slaughtered?"

Once, on the borders of Syria, I met a Jewish refugee from Bagdad who opened his clothing and showed me the still unhealed knife wounds he had received during a pogrom. He raised to me mournful eyes filled with the honey of Levantine sorrow, and poured out his complaints in guttural Arabic. Now the Samaritans were complaining in exactly the same tone of voice, and undoubtedly the Jews had once lamented that way by the waters of Babylon.

We went down from the Mount of Blessing. Just as we reached Nablus the full moon floated up. Now the Samaritans would be gathering round the fires. To each family a spitted lamb would be carried. "And ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover."

For this smallest of all the peoples in the world devoutly believes in *Ata bachartanu,* the doctrine of the elect: that they are beloved of the Lord above all other nations, and that they alone will be called to welcome the Messiah. Are they not the only people who have maintained blood sacrifice? Do they not rigorously observe the Mosaic prescriptions?—even their infants, who are not given the breast during Yom Kippur?

THEY were gathered together now, all two hundred and six of them, hastily eating the sacrificial meat with the bitter herbs, in the hour in which the first-born of Egypt perished. For who knew whether the Messiah would not come at this very moment, and whether they would have time to finish the meal?

They would remain seven more days on the mountain. On the last day they would go up to its summit, where the *Shekinah* —the incarnation of the Divine Spirit— dwells. Then they would come back down the mountain to their crafts and their little shops—all 206 of the "chosen nation" working industriously so that nothing might be lost. The female baby born the day before yesterday already had its appointed husband.

But meanwhile they would also pester their far richer Jewish relations for work and a school, they would avoid the Arab knife, and dream in secret of the day that would surely come, when all the Jews and Arabs would carry in their arms these poor and despised remnants of the mighty Assyrians to the region of bliss.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STUDY OF MAN

AMERICA'S ETHNIC PATTERN

"Melting Pot" or "Nation of Nations"?

NATHAN GLAZER

THE fact that Americans are also—and in many cases, primarily—Germans, Italians, Poles, Jews, etc. is taken with deadly seriousness by the general mass of Americans, but tends rather to be ignored by contemporary writers on social problems, and perhaps more ignored by academic writers than by popular ones. There was a time when the problem of creating an English-speaking nation, with a common loyalty, out of a population at least half of which stems from non-English-speaking peoples was a major subject of discussion in this country. It was during the time of that discussion—roughly the first twenty-five years of this century—that two quite contradictory concepts were developed which have since dominated the consideration of this problem.

The first concept was that of the "melting pot," a phrase now so common a part of our vocabulary that it is hard to believe it was invented by Israel Zangwill, who used it as the title of a play in 1906. Performed today, the play would bring down upon him the denunciation of almost every communal leader in Jewish life: for it argues that in America all the strains of the Old World should blend together to form a new and better race, in which the individuality of the races, nations, and religions that made it up would be lost, being transmuted into a new, noble compound. Holding this philosophy, the play's hero, a young Jewish immigrant from Russia, marries the heroine, another immigrant who is the daughter of the very czarist official responsible for the pogrom in which his own parents died.

The "melting pot" phrase and theory were accepted with alacrity by both the immigrants and the older Americans who rejected the exclusionist and racist ideas, then beginning to be popular, that eventually led to the end of mass immigration. Its corollary was the program of "Americanization," which aimed to teach English and American customs to every immigrant, and make him a citizen. All went swimmingly until, with the outbreak of the First World War, those holding to the theory of the melting pot and the program of Americanization were shaken by the violence with which the cause of the warring nations in Europe was taken up here in America. Former President Roosevelt and President Wilson spoke with disapproval of "hyphenated" Americanism; and in the new situation the sanguine view that the immigrants were merging indistinguishably into a common American man, which their intellectual spokesmen had put forward to justify keeping the gates of America open, lost credit.

ONCE again, it so happened, it was a Jewish intellectual who supplied a theory to explain and justify what was happening. In a series of articles published in various journals in the early years of the First World War, Horace M. Kallen argued that the "melting pot" did not represent true democracy. It was akin to the Germanizing of Danes, Poles, and Frenchmen in the Kaiser's empire, and the Russifying of Finns, Poles, Jews, and others in the Czar's empire. This was not democracy, but the crushing of a natural right to be different. America's

---

NATHAN GLAZER is an associate editor of COMMENTARY, and a frequent contributor. His most recent article was "The Method of Senator McCarthy," which appeared in last month's issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

model should be Switzerland, where the loyalty of every national element to the Swiss state was beyond question—yet where each maintained its individuality and its national culture. America should ideally become a "democracy of nationalities"—and this indeed, Kallen argued, was what was happening. Later he was to call this theory "cultural pluralism."

The depression, combined with the stringent laws of the 20's, cut off all mass immigration and silenced the discussion as to the pattern that would emerge in America. Then with the rise of Hitler, the situation of the First World War began to return. In 1938, American citizens of Czech and German descent found it hard to look at each other—or themselves—as simply Americans. The old passions were reawakened. And Kallen's point of view was now revived by Louis Adamic in a series of volumes of which perhaps the most representative was *A Nation of Nations*. Adamic wrote much more, and much more confusedly, than Kallen had. Essentially, however, he was again arguing that true democracy demanded that America be constituted as a democracy of nationalities, not as a democracy of a single new nationality, the American. And the corollary of a "nation of nations" was a program of "intercultural education."

But up to now we have been speaking of the history of ideas. What actually did happen? What was the result of the greatest migration in history? To what extent did the migrants merge into a single great community, and to what extent did they preserve their individuality? What parts of their lives and interests did they sacrifice to the new nation, and what did they retain?

The present article attempts to suggest the main lines taken by the assimilation of the various ethnic groups that make up the American population. It draws only from the topmost surface of a sea of material—standard histories of the various groups, and the leading accounts of the entire process. This material is in large part ten or twenty years old, for the great debate on the assimilation of the ethnic groups, which reached a peak during and shortly after the First World War, now seems to have closed—or come to a temporary halt.

IT WOULD make things simple if the two concepts of the "melting pot" and the "nation of nations" could be assigned to different periods—if we could believe, as so many do, that the earlier American immigrants (Germans, Irish, Norwegians, Swedes, English) did indeed assimilate rapidly, and that for them the "melting pot" worked; while the later immigrants—Italians, Jews, Poles, Slovaks, South Slavs, Greeks, and so on—did not assimilate as rapidly, and that to them the "nation of nations" concept was applicable.

Actually, on the basis of the facts, one could more easily argue the opposite. An important section of the major element in the earlier migration—the Germans—came with just the idea of creating a nation of their countrymen in America. In the 1830's there was considerable agitation among disappointed German liberals for the creation of a new and free German homeland in America: a sizable number of Germans emigrated to Missouri and Southern Illinois to carry out these plans. In the 1840's, large tracts of land were bought in Texas by German noblemen and many thousands of German settlers were sent there with the intention of creating a German nation in Texas, or even transforming Texas itself into a German state. A little later, a tremendous German migration took place into Wisconsin—and the most perceptive writer on the Germans in America (John Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German America,* 1940) argues that at least some of those involved in fostering it were very likely motivated by the idea of making Wisconsin a German state—and very nearly succeeded. But the net effect of this German effort at nation-building in America was only a few all-German schools, a few all-German towns, which by the third and fourth generation were speaking English and were demanding that the sermons in their churches be given in English.

The Germans in Europe were a nation before they became a state—that is, they existed as a nationally conscious group before the legal form of a German nation was created. The Irish, the second most important element in the earlier immigration, were also a nation before they were a state, and many came to America with the intention of assisting the creation of an Irish state in Europe. On one occasion they did not hesitate to organize armies in America to attack the British in Canada. (Many years later, American Jews were equally unconcerned about sponsoring armed resistance to the same power.) But they did not, as did the Germans, make any serious efforts to create

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an Irish nation in the full sense of the word in America. In 1818, Irish associations in New York and Philadelphia petitioned Congress for a large tract of land on whch to settle Irish poor from the Eastern cities; but there seems to have been no national intention involved. Congress's decision on this occasion settled once and for all the possibility of nationally conscious European nations recreating themselves in America. It refused to sell land in blocks for such purposes, insisting on individual sales and individual settlement. This was certainly one of the most important decisions made in the first half-century of America's national existence.

IN ANY case, it is highly questionable whether national homogeneity, even had Congress approved the Irish request, could have been maintained; in almost every immigrant group individual motives kept on asserting themselves, and again and again caused the disintegration of the homogeneous colonies of the ideologues, and led the immigrants who had come to settle on the land, with its conservative influences, to desert it for the city, with its powerful assimilative effects. The decision, on the national level, in favor of individual settlement; the decision, on the part of individual settlers, to strike out without the formal assistance of colonies and settlement companies, with their inevitable authority over their settlers—these two facts made it impossible, despite the ideology of the Germans, and of perhaps some Irishmen, to create branches of European nations in America.

A third factor was equally important: the division of labor which took place on the frontier, with English-speaking elements, as the first settlers everywhere, naturally claiming the prerogatives and power of the first-comers. If, like the Mormons, the Germans had struck out into unsettled territory, they would have had a state or states for themselves, with all the power—for example, to determine the official state language—that the Constitution reserves for states. But they never, not even in Wisconsin, had the strength to establish such a state as the Mormons made for themselves in Utah—that belongs to the first-comers. And everywhere the first-comers were Anglo-Saxons. Centuries in the New World had created the highly specialized breed of frontiersman who could do the initial clearing of the wilderness while feeding himself by means of his rifle. Influential guidebooks written for German and other prospective immigrants warned the farmers of the Old World to avoid the frontier—it was not for them. It is true that, after the initial clearing, the immigrant made a better farmer than the Anglo-Saxon. After all, the least efficient farmers in the country are the descendants of this pioneering stock in the Southern and border states; the best are the immigrants and their children. But the economic prosperity attendant on the superior techniques of the immigrants did not give them the power to mold the cultural and political life of the state. Again and again, it can be seen how the first few thousand settlers in an area had far more weight in this respect than hundreds of thousands who came later. They set up the school system; the legal system; they wrote the state constitution; they had the most political experience; they had the prestige which led the later-coming majority—or at least their children—to conform to *their* standards, rather than vice versa.

So while many Germans, and some Irish, came with the intention of creating a "nation of nations," most of them ended up as the principal ingredients of the "melting pot."

PERHAPS more successful in creating nations—at least for a while—was what we might call the "intermediate" immigration: the Norwegians and Swedes. If the Irish and the Germans came from nations that were not yet states, the Norwegians and Swedes came from states that were not yet nations. The upper classes in all countries are aware of their existence as a nation; it is they who create national literature, a national language, a national culture. But while these stages in the creation of a nation were completed in England, France, and Germany quite early, and national consciousness had percolated down to the lower orders in these countries by the 19th century, in Norway and Sweden the creation of a nation in this sense was largely a product of the later 19th century. The peasants who came to this country from Scandinavia thought of themselves less as members of nations than as coming from a certain family and village, and belonging to a certain church.

Despite this, more of them were successful in creating a national existence in America than were the Germans; that is, they lived in homogeneous farming colonies using their native language, had their own newspapers,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

books, and publishing houses, a church that conducted its activities in the language of the "old country," and schools to continue the language and culture in succeeding generations. And this was accomplished without the aid of the ideology which moved the Germans: it was accomplished solely by the conditions of their settlement in America. For while there was no need for the Norwegian or Swedish peasant to think of himself as a Norwegian or Swede in the home country—and indeed, he did not—he was immediately faced with the need for establishing his own identity here. He had to consider whether he should send his children to the English school, or set up his own school; whether to attend the English-speaking church, or establish branches of the established church of the old country. And since the natural course of settlement was to seek out the regions where friends and countrymen and relatives had settled, and so to create a dense concentration of settlers clearly marked off from the surrounding countryside, this answer was given by conditions.

Originally without any ideology, with no strong concern for or knowledge of Swedish or Norwegian culture, these colonies soon developed a great concern with such matters, and maintained it through three generations. Insofar as the Germans settled under the same circumstances, they showed the same history; but the Germans as a group were much more widely distributed, occupationally and geographically, than the Norwegians and Swedes. The Irish, as concentrated geographically as the Scandinavians, lived in the cities, in which an isolated folk existence was impossible, and they were even more dispersed occupationally than the Germans. Eventually, the growth of the cities, the rise of greater attractions there than in farming, and the actual decline of the farming population were the means by which these Scandinavian colonies too were reduced, and these elements too, in sizable measure, entered the melting pot.

It is consequently rather simple-minded to think of the Germans, Irish, Norwegians, and Swedes as groups that easily assimilated to the Anglo-Saxon temper of American life. The Germans in particular had a strong feeling against assimilation. They felt they had brought culture to a relatively benighted country—as, indeed, in certain respects they had. They opposed intermarriage; they felt very strongly about the maintenance of "Germanism." True, they never succeeded in giving really solid institutional form to their feeling for German life and culture, and when World War I came they buried their opposition and quite disappointed the German government with their American patriotism. And yet as late as 1940, when Franklin D. Roosevelt, who did not conceal his anti-Nazi feelings, was running against a candidate of German descent (Willkie), the old American Germandom showed itself in force. German-language newspapers called openly for the support of the "German" candidate. Counties, indistinguishable on census returns from their neighbors, turned strongly against Roosevelt: these counties would have been easily distinguishable in the census returns of 1890, when they would have shown a high proportion of German-born from the migrations during the middle of the century.

We can, I think, conclude: where these early immigrants were isolated and remained rural, they showed an amazing persistence in maintaining the old language, religion, and culture (or, to be more exact, variants of each, developed in response to American conditions: nothing was transplanted unchanged). Where they settled in cities, as did the Irish, many of the Germans, and the later Norwegians and Swedes, a shorter time sufficed to remove the language and culture they had brought with them.

But this did not end the matter, for after language and culture were gone, ideology and religion remained. The Irish did not live under circumstances that permitted them to construct in America the amazing replicas of the old country that rural settlers were able to create in many other places. They became culturally indistinguishable from their surroundings much faster than if they had become farmers; but they continued to be distinguished by their strong concern for the fate of the old country.

Supporting this concern for the old country in almost every case was the old religion. As Oscar Handlin has pointed out, the state churches of the old country were thrown on the mercy of the immigrants in the new. And these, clutching at everything familiar in the strange new world, supported them as they never would have at home. Religion became, for many groups, indistinguishable from loyalty to the old homeland. (In those cases, as in Poland and Ireland, where the religion of an oppressed national group differed from that of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the oppressors, the church had already taken on the character of a national church, linked with the national struggle, that it commonly took on in America.) There was a certain virtue for the immigrant groups in this confusion between religious devotion and national allegiance. For since religion is rigorously separated from American public life, loyalty to the old country in the form of heightened religious practice did not compete in any way, either in the minds of older Americans or of immigrants, with loyalty to America. But despite the honesty with which the immigrant could believe that he had divested himself of all political ties to the homeland, it would be naive not to see in the religion of many immigrant groups transmuted substitutes for allegiance to the abandoned countries. And indeed, when the mother countries were imperiled, the churches often played a leading role in bringing to their aid the children settled in America.

We can thus, by some oversimplification, distinguish two very distinct sources in the complex of factors preventing the full assimilation of the early immigrant groups: one arose from the conditions of settlement (isolation and concentration); one arose from what we may call ideological commitment to the old country—its religion, its culture, its political and national needs. The Germans were strengthened in their apartness by both; the Irish by the latter; the Norwegians and Swedes, with no country to free from a foreign yoke, only by the former.

The later immigrants showed the same range of variability, with the same, as well as different, factors at work. They also came from nations struggling to become states (Poles, Lithuanians, Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes), states struggling to become nations (Italy, Turkey, and Greece), as well as areas quite outside these Western concepts of state and nation (Syrians); and they included as their second most numerous element, a people—the Jews—who fell into none of these categories completely, but who, almost by dint of their own efforts, created a state and so finally "normalized" themselves, at least in this one sense: they became akin to the Irish, the Poles, the Greeks, and the other "nations" of America. These groups reflected the far more backward conditions of Eastern and Southern Europe. Unlike the earlier immigrants, they were completely cut off from the political life of the areas from which they came. In their homelands, politics was the monopoly not only of a different class, but, in almost every case, of a different people. The nationalist ideologies of Europe could have little to do with preventing the complete assimilation of these peasant, lower caste peoples. (Again, we must except the Jews.)

Yet the newcomers became European nations—and nationalists—in America. As Max Ascoli writes of the Italians (we must remember that the great mass of Italian immigrants, who rank first in the new immigration, as the Germans rank first in the old, came from the depressed South of Italy): "They became Americans before they ever were Italians." Indeed, the creation of national languages, a task which the Western European nations had accomplished centuries before, was considerably facilitated for these backward peoples by American emigration. In American cities people of various villages speaking various dialects came together, and they needed a common, standardized language. Also they were far more dependent on newspapers than at home—and this required a standardized written language. The first newspaper in the Lithuanian language was published in the United States, not in Lithuania. The urbanization of many East European peoples occurred in America, not in Europe; and the effects of urbanization—its creation of some common denominator of nationality, its replacement of the sub-ideological feelings of villagers with a variety of modern ideologies—were in large measure first displayed in America. The Erse revival began in Boston, and the nation of Czechoslovakia was launched at a meeting in Pittsburgh. And all this should not surprise us too much when we realize that some of these areas in Europe were so depopulated that the immigrants and their descendants in America sometimes surpassed in numbers—not to speak of wealth—those who were left behind.

If some nations were in large measure created in America, other immigrants were to discover on coming to America that they had left nations behind—nations in which they had had no part at home. Thus, the American relatives of Southern Italians—to whom, as Ignazio Silone and Carlo Levi describe them, the Ethiopian war meant nothing more than another affliction visited upon them by the alien government of the North—became Italian pa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

triots in America and supported Mussolini in a war to which they would have been indifferent in Italy.

NEVERTHELESS, and in contrast, it was among these same immigrants that the problem of the violent turning away of the second generation from the life of the first—that intense passion for Americanization whose other side is self-hatred and rejection—became an important phenomenon. When we consider such questions of social psychology, we are not on very sure ground: yet I feel that the problem of the "rejection" of the immigrant parents which plays so great a role in Oscar Handlin's *The Uprooted* is the problem of the later immigrant group, not the earlier. And it is not hard to see why. If Thorstein Veblen, son of a Norwegian immigrant who was raised speaking his father's language, and who went to his father's church, ever had a passion for assimilation, it could be countered by the pull of an ancient culture which the Anglo-Saxon world respected: he could translate the Norse sagas. Similarly, one can understand how it was possible for German culture to maintain itself among such large numbers in the second and third generation—and had it not been for the trauma of the First World War, it would undoubtedly have been much stronger among the third and fourth generations than it is today. For not only could the Germans boast a connection with one of the strongest and most advanced nations in the world; the Americans themselves, up until the First World War, sent their most promising students to study in German universities. In the same way, less important groups like the French and Dutch in America could take pride in their ancestry. And of course the large immigration from Great Britain also had no occasion to forget its past.

How much sadder was the condition of Slovaks and Ruthenians and Croats! If some intellectuals in these groups were creating a national language and culture, their own peasants—let alone the world—knew nothing of it. They could not even answer the common American question, "What are you?" They were listed in immigration and census statistics indiscriminately as natives of "Austria-Hungary," and they themselves often lacked any clearer notion of who they were than the Americans who dubbed them "bohunks." So while, on the one hand, the conditions of existence in a strange land led them to come together to found newspapers and fraternal societies, and eventually to determine to take pride in their ancestry and some interest in their homelands—at the same time, the fact that they came from nations of peasants, caste nations without an aristocracy or a middle class, and with only the beginnings of an intelligentsia, meant that large numbers of them were unable to define themselves in terms of their origins and therefore flung themselves into a feverish Americanization.

The tragedy of these nationless and pastless immigrants has nowhere been better told than by Louis Adamic. Adamic, himself an immigrant from one of those relatively history-less peoples of the Balkans, was an indefatigable and passionate seeker after knowledge of the history of these groups in America. He traveled around the country; he spoke before—and with—groups of first- and second-generation Poles, Ukrainians, South Slavs, and others. He wrote more on this problem than anyone else—though he was as perplexed after he had written five books on the subject as before he wrote the first. He was deeply worried about the second generation arising from a people in whom—as far as they knew—they could take no pride. He found the second generation changing their names and becoming more Americanized in their attachments to fads and surface mannerisms than the "Americans" themselves. They seemed to him utterly empty, rootless, and unreal.

IN *What's Your Name?* Adamic tells at great length the story of the son of a Lemko coal miner who had come to hear Adamic lecture once in Cleveland. The Lemkoes are one of those small peoples of the Carpathians related to the Slovaks and the Ruthenians and who, one guesses, ended up a separate people, rather than a sub-group or a dialect, as a matter of accident. In the town where the father was a coal miner, there were a number of Lemkoes, but even there the matter of self-definition arose. One could choose to go to a variety of churches. One could assimilate to the dominant ethnic group among the coal miners, or continue to assert one's identity as a Lemko, or become an "American." The man who told Adamic his story decided to change his name and become an "American," without further identification. The difficulties and miseries that began to plague him as he got a job as a history teacher, married, had a child, and lived

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in a Midwest town where people felt he had "something to hide" are utterly convincing; the solution of his problems—his return to his original name, and his acceptance of his abandoned father—is not.

And yet, while too pat to be taken seriously, the story of the acceptance of his origins by this son of a Lemko immigrant raises a social-psychological pattern of immigrant life as important as second-generation rejection. For this rejection is often succeeded by a "return," in some sense, to the original culture. Of course the culture one returns to is not the culture one left: thus, the nature of the interest of some young Jews today in their East European background is perhaps more remote from the real character of East European Jewish life than their fathers' rebellion against that life—at least the rebellion arose from direct contact with it. Yet on an ideological level, if not on the level of cultural practice, the third generation shows a new tendency toward acceptance.

This important phenomenon was first discussed, to my knowledge, by the greatest student of American immigration, Marcus L. Hansen (see his essay, reprinted in COMMENTARY under the title "The Third Generation in America," November 1952). His perception seems to me all the more remarkable in that he discovered this third-generation reaction among these groups in whom, to my mind, it was mildest and least impressive—the earlier immigrant groups of Scotch-Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians. Among these groups, the steady disintegration of the culture brought over by the immigrants proceeded evenly. There were no important shocks such as later immigrants received in the form of quota acts, alien registration acts, and anti-immigrant agitation—for despite the presence of this type of sentiment throughout American history, it was never as strong against the Northern and Western European immigrants as it was against those from Eastern and Southern Europe. The one great shock the even development of this earlier element suffered was the First World War, which only hastened the abandonment of German culture and short-circuited a fully developed third-generation reaction.

IT WAS just in the newer groups (none of whom had developed third generations of any size when Hansen wrote in 1938) that the "Americanizing" attitude of the second generation was so prominent, and that the "return" of the third generation is most marked. The voting blocs of Poles, Italians, and Jews were never so important as in the 1940's and 1950's, twenty and thirty years after the end of mass immigration. In part, of course, this was simply because a greater number were voting for the first time; in larger part, because of the Second World War. But these groups would not have shown such strong, common reactions did they not maintain some feelings of common identity which made it possible for events to affect them, at least in some measure, as a group.*

We have already pointed out that these later groups (except for the Jews) did not so much bring nationalistic ideologies from Europe as develop them while discovering their identity in America. To this extent, therefore, the "return" reaction of the third generation was already apparent in the first. These discoverers of their nationality of course had a difficult time keeping any sizable number of their children close to it. But they had arrived in an America in which ethnic anonymity was more difficult to achieve than fifty years before. When the Anglo-Saxon origins of America were most apparent to all its inhabitants, when its character as an English-speaking nation was most assured, incoming immigrants had a somewhat different character: they came in small enough numbers to be either invisible or exotic, and they did not reinforce a preexisting mass of their compatriots. Thus, they often found it easy to assimilate—or hard to resist the conditions making it so easy. We find in many towns records of the existence of groups of Jews in the early part of the 19th century who had completely disappeared by the 20th: in some cases, we can trace the details of their disappearance by intermarriage and conversion. If such a hardy element disappeared, it is easy to believe that the spearheads of other ethnic elements were also swallowed up in a different America.

But this was less likely, I think, in 20th-century America. A century of immigration

*One may also give a more positive interpretation to this pattern of greater willingness to assert one's origins in the third generation than in the second. Even the "oldest" Americans trace back their ancestry to Europe, with some pride. Perhaps with a greater degree of assimilation comes a greater willingness to accept one's origins.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had alerted the "native" population to the characteristics of immigrant groups; a century of agitation had made them exclusive; a society in which large bureaucratic organizations played a greater role, in which the habits of the frontier were no longer even a memory, in which a hectic rate of growth and expansion had been succeeded by somewhat greater stability, led to a stronger emphasis being placed on a man's origins and his "type." In sum, "respectability" had become an important value in American life; and while it led, on the one hand, to a more complete effort by some individuals to deny their origins by name-changing and religion-changing in order to gain the advantages held by the "respectable" elements of the society, it also led many others to react by asserting their individuality more sharply. It is this development in American society itself, as well as certain subsidiary factors—such as the Second World War, and the heightening of ethnic consciousness it caused—which has produced on a wide and important scale a "third-generation" reaction among the newer immigrants.

This development, it would seem, reacts to some extent upon the earlier groups, giving them a justification for asserting a common interest. The Germans, despite the loss of the culture which was their glory up to 1914, again take on, to some extent, a common identity and common reactions, which made them almost as important in the election of 1940 as in that of 1860.

To return to the two concepts with which we began: the "melting pot" described the reality of assimilation which has characterized, to some extent, and in every period, each one of the ethnic groups migrating to this country. The "nation of nations" described one reality for the earlier period of our history: those homogeneous colonies to be found principally on the Great Plains, but to some extent everywhere in the country, which maintained the immigrant's language, religion, and culture. Today the "nations" that make up America no longer find much justification in the maintenance of language, religion, and culture: they are private or subconscious "nations" held together only by a nostalgia which does not dare to become an ideology, a frame of mind which itself has no organic relation to their Old World past but is a reaction to the conditions of 20th-century America.

What remains most questionable today in this history of assimilation is the status and future prospects of these ghost nations, built around ideologies of support of the home countries, and drawing their real strength from experiences in America which make their elements feel less than full Americans. Whether these empty nations are only given the illusion of a relatively vigorous life by recent developments in Europe, or whether the conditions of American life are not such as to maintain and strengthen them for some time to come: this is something that only the next twenty years can decide.

And yet, however it is decided, it is important to realize that this question concerns the different groups that are involved more than it does the American state as a whole. For the history of the assimilation of ethnic groups in this country, whatever the complexities that have characterized it, is overwhelmingly a history of success, from the point of view of the state. Disloyalty—in the First World War, in the Second World War, in the present struggle with Communism—has never been a serious problem in this country, and indeed, it has been far less serious than in many countries of a homogeneous stock. Further, it could be powerfully argued that in both world wars an ideology independent of ethnic affiliation—in the first war, socialist pacifism, in the second fascism—played a much greater role in whatever disloyalty there was than any national ties. In the present situation, this is so self-evident as to need no argument.

The problem of assimilation is thus no longer a political one in any significant sense. The complete identification of the overwhelming majority of persons in each group with America in spite of any experiences of discrimination is assured. Rather, the problem of assimilation is now a cultural one, and for each group. In each, larger or smaller numbers of people now worry as to what to do about the burden of real and imaginary traditions. Should they embrace it, reject it, select from it? And what of the American environment, formally indifferent to ethnic varieties as it is to religious ones? Does it actually encourage or discourage one or another of these solutions? This whole range of problems in the history of ethnic assimilation is still left open, and is worthy of more thought and study than it has received.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS FROM READERS

Bowery Days

To the Editor of Commentary:

Samuel S. Cohen's account of his "Recreational Enterprise on the Bowery" (November 1952) with his select clientele of pickpockets, pimps, and petty-larceny grafters, was delightful reading for its piquant mixture of innocence and realism. He tells of his experiences at the Othello Pool Hall with an air of wonder, as if surprised that these things actually happened to him.

But I don't doubt for a moment that they did. All things are possible when one is very young, and there was a time upon which I too look back with surprised wonder to think that I was actually the bearer of the proud title of "Organizer" for the Bowery Unemployment Council.

This was of course during the depression, about the time of Roosevelt's election, when the unemployed were just beginning to band together to improve their situation. The Bowery group was an off-shoot of the South Street Waterfront Unemployment Council. Its mainstays were a young Liverpool Irishman named Luke, whose citizenship papers were in such a bad state of disorder because of desertion and illegal entry that he wasn't eligible for the seamen's organization, and me, who had been to sea so infrequently that there was some doubt about my maritime status.

The Communists and their sympathizers at that time were resolute and active in the unemployed battle. They lent us a beat-up mimeograph and distributed leaflets far and wide on the Bowery, to the bewilderment of many of the baffled habitués who were past thinking of any social step except how to secure their next drink or smoke.

We also made speeches and once staged a successful sitdown strike in a relief agency, but became disillusioned when our silent partners, the Commies, let us gradually know that we were expected to link up our activities with a program for world revolution. . . .

Mr. Cohen's reminiscent article reminded me of all this, a result very far from its original purpose, I am sure.

Ridgely Cummings

Hollywood, California

Jewish Existentialism

To the Editor of Commentary:

For some time now I have been wondering about the preponderance of writers on religious existentialism in Commentary's pages. . . .

Among the many impossibilities of existentialism, one which is distinctly impossible to Jewish thought is expressed by Hans Schoeps in "How Live by Jewish Law Today" in January's issue. The principle that man must realize his fallen state before he can come to God is indisputably Christian. Nevertheless Schoeps writes: "In the moment that man acknowledges *his guilt* the word of God has found its way to him. In discovering that God's will and man's wish are not the same, the *primal wound of life* is opened in him. . . ."

The foremost American exponent of existentialism, Will Herberg, has been more explicit. At a public meeting which I attended he proclaimed the doctrine of Original Sin as a basic tenet of existentialist theory. Not only is this concept completely foreign to Judaism but it is illogical as well. Christianity follows through in a logical manner and offers an expiatory means of overcoming Original Sin. But existentialism provides no reasonable system of extracting man from this dejected state and offers only a nonrational "leap" to ethereal spheres.

Franz Rosenzweig's journey from near apostasy to near-Orthodoxy ("Discovery of the East European Jew," January 1953) is truly amazing. Perhaps it is no less amazing that he should have brought along the thoroughly Christian and, from the Jewish point of view, utterly untenable theological position of the fallen state.

(Rabbi) Milton H. Elefant

B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
University of Maine
Orono, Maine

In Tails, Tallis, Etc.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I always enjoy S. T. Hecht's stories about North Jersey Jewish life, but—let's face it—those translations from the Yiddish leave something to be desired. Aside from the translitera-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion from Yiddish into something that sounds like less than a Litvak can bear (we pronounce "death" to sound like *tayt* not *toyt*), Mr. Hecht is very free with the meaning of the original. For example, he ends his most recent story ("In Tails, Tallis, and Tachrichim," February 1953) with an excellent pun in Yiddish: *Mir lachen fun* (sic) *toyt*. But he translates this to mean: Death tickles our fancy. How fancy can you get! Not by the wildest flight of fancy does that expression deal with tickling or with fancy. Why not play it straight and say "We're laughing at Death." I admit that it is much more difficult to translate *Honig hot er dort nit gelekt*. But why drag in the business about honey served on wafers and omit the really pointed word "licked"? The only way I can explain these departures from the pristine Yiddish is to suppose that Mr. Hecht is playing an elaborate joke on those who have no idea of what the idioms mean. If that is the case, he is dealing very harshly with the *goyim*, both inside and outside the Temple.

EDMUND B. FELDMAN
West Orange, New Jersey

British Anti-Americanism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There seem to be seriously confusing opinions in Mr. Fyvel's article, "Realities Behind British Anti-Americanism," in your December 1952 issue. . . .

Mr. Fyvel is very sure that it is only our "melancholy Roman Catholic novelists brooding over Britain's decline" who are alarmed by the cheap American tastes to be found among our young people. Now, sensation, noise, and new things generally do attract them; if the new happens to be a vulgarized American style in haircuts, ties, and language, who is to blame if no indigenous British styles have prevented this advent? Yet Mr. Fyvel believes that American-organized mass entertainment "helped to bring variety and color" to British working-class life. What criteria of value is he using then? Roman Catholics, leftists, and highbrows —to employ his categories—are, of course, among those who criticize American tastes, but it need hardly be said that there are people on both sides of the Atlantic, irrespective of denominational and intellectual prejudice, who recognize and attack the influential fifth-rate whenever it appears. . . .

Attacks on MacArthur, Dulles, etc. are found, says Mr. Fyvel, "expressed with a sarcastic sharpness" mainly in the "downstart" classes, which include the "upper middle class." A discerning Englishman would protest against the "sharpness" of such a vulgar anti-American tone, but surely he is entitled to criticize if he is informed that Mr. Truman had to recall the General from his Korean exploits, that Mr. Chaplin was castigated for his opinions once he was out of the country, and that Mr. Nixon will be President should any misfortune befall Mr. Eisenhower. When the British Americanophile sees what he seriously believes are flaws in your cultural pattern, which is so influential throughout the world, he naturally hopes that reasonable criticism will call forth a friendly response from the United States. This is not anti-Americanism.

Nor would a sensible person resent the American "capitalist version of a classless society," as Mr. Fyvel describes it, if it did indeed maintain or introduce good standards of society. "The intellectual class's privileges" must go (if they ever existed) in the century of democratic culture; but if this culture entails the common lowering of standards of personal responsibility and national taste, it should be criticized wherever it comes from. . . .

E. N. W. MOTTRAM
Pembroke College
Cambridge, England

Letting Children Alone

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one of the contributors to the book *Our Children Today*, I was much interested by Professor J. Glenn Gray's comments ("How to Be a Parent—and Stay Sane") in January on my chapter "Are Parents to Blame?"

I appreciate Professor Gray's characterizing my few remarks as a "spirited essay." I appreciate, too, his crediting me with being a brave soul "swimming against the current." But the truth is, I'm afraid, that Professor Gray exaggerates; for I am not so much swimming against the current as trying to deflect it slightly.

Specifically, I never intended to cast doubt on the view that human development is profoundly influenced by the parent-child relationship or that the neuroses of later life have their beginnings during these early years. What I did say is that the forces that go into the making of human character are so numerous and so complex that parents can hardly be blamed for not knowing how to control them completely. It's a ticklish business to prevent the small child with his limited sense of reality from misconstruing the thousand and one events of daily life with his parents. The two-to-three-year-old is terribly and fatefully prone

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to view every denial we impose on him as the withdrawal of love with all the anxiety and subsequent complications that this entails. On the other hand if we *never* deny, we leave a child to the mercy of his instincts; this too generates anxiety and here is the essential dilemma which parents face in determining how to treat their children.

To risk an analogy—and I have already suggested that this is dangerous—holding parents altogether responsible for their child's neuroses is like blaming them if a child catches cold. Colds are probably caused by viruses; the watchful mother should prevent her child from exposure; *ergo*, if a child gets a cold the mother is to blame. The truth is that though parents certainly should do their best to prevent infections, children will get colds now and then even with the best of care. Some seem constitutionally more susceptible than others. The same may be true of neuroses. Neuroses of course are much more destructive than colds; but here too, despite the fact that I, together with my colleagues, view them as rooted in the events of early childhood, we do not yet know—except in the most general terms—how to prevent them with any degree of certainty. Here I suspect I am not out of line with even the most orthodox Freudian.

But I also emphasized, and this Professor Gray does not mention, that this is no excuse for complacency. There are still some parental actions and attitudes which we have learned may have devastating effects. These can be prevented or modified only if the parents can become truly aware of what they are doing. I tried to make it quite clear that it is their responsibility to know what the pitfalls are and to gain this awareness as far as is humanly possible even though they may need professional help to this end.

I cannot agree with Professor Gray's blanket statement that what children most need is "letting alone." There is one kind of "letting alone" which is downright neglect and another kind which is wholesome and intelligent. I think he should have made this distinction and even elaborated on it much more fully if he was going to offer it as a plan for mitigating the not inconsiderable woes that beset the human race.

ANNA W. M. WOLF

New York City

The Smith Act

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Despite the cogency of much of his analysis of the Smith Act (January), Professor Sidney Hook fails to grapple with the two major difficulties of the anti-Communist campaign, to wit:

(1) The vaporousness of the "clear and present danger" concept, which has left to arbitrary judicial decision what should be clear legislative mandate. To transfer the responsibility of interpretation from judge to jury, as Professor Hook suggests, would compound the difficulty. An issue that divides philosophers and Supreme Court justices is not easily resolved by untrained laymen. Jury determination, case by case, would guarantee capricious application of the law and add greatly to public confusion.

(2) The paradox—if the defendants were clean-handed, "outrage" would be the proper term—of prosecuting individuals for leading a party which is itself legal.

Both these difficulties can be easily surmounted by directing the legal attack at the party itself. There are ample grounds for its dissolution quite apart from foreign control and subversion. The Communist party has over the years engaged in so many thousands of overt acts of assault, slander, and riot that these may fairly be regarded as normal to its operation. There is voluminous evidence of its cooperation in acts of espionage, murder, fraud, perjury, etc. It has no more right to a legal existence than the Mafia or the Klan. Nor is there room on the ballot for a "party" whose program includes the mass murder of entire classes and parties.

We might as well use, however, a *Congressional* finding of "clear and present danger" as basis for declaring it a capital crime to attempt the underground organization of criminal bodies. Such a law would permit drastic action against subversion without imposing any limitation on speech whatever. If a few harmless blowfish were caught in a net designed for sharks they would be candidates for executive clemency.

Prosecution of the Communist party as a super-crime syndicate would prove highly educational to a public which knows little of its operational methods, and would avoid the appearance of *ex post facto* sanctions and persecution for conscience' sake which so troubles our liberals. Outlawry of the party would draw a broad and unmistakable line between heterodox conviction and criminal action.

VICTOR FOX

New York City

Israel's Choir Festival

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As Executive Director of the Zimriah I am deeply disturbed by the misinformation con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tained in Mr. Chemjo Vinaver's article, "Israelis Singing in Chorus" (February 1952), and the lack of objectivity which permeates it.

The purpose of the first assembly of Jewish choirs was primarily national and not musical. The singing served as a means of emphasizing the unity among all the Jews within and outside of Israel. . . . There was no "selection" of choirs, as Mr. Vinaver implies, and there was no competition or contest among the choirs. The World Executive Committee of the Hazamir invited, through the press, letters, and individual contact, all Jewish choirs everywhere that were ready to participate and able to pay their own fares. . . .

Of the reaction of the public Mr. Vinaver has this to say: "The much heralded festival became the butt of the jokesters, and for its duration an aroused *vox populi* made itself heard in Tel Aviv cafés and buses." Comments supposedly overheard in cafés and buses may be one way of gauging public reaction to a music festival, but a critic with integrity would be more inclined to seek such insight in the concert hall itself. . . .

The facts speak for themselves. A total of 140,000 people attended the performances of the choirs in the following places: Jerusalem, Ramat-Gan, Rishon Lezion, Zichron-Yaakov, Haifa, Galilee, and Emek. There was not a single performance which did not attract an overflow audience, who literally cheered in appreciation. None of the planners of the festival envisioned that nearly forty thousand people would attend the Stadium concert or that two auditoriums in Jerusalem and three in Haifa having concerts on the same evening would all get overflow audiences. . . . In addition there were concerts in military camps, hospitals, factories, and kibbutzim. . . .

Not always does a choir, or a conductor, meet with such a reception, even in Israel where audiences are warm and responsive. Mr. Vinaver and I know of one conductor whose very well-publicized concert in Tel Aviv had to be cancelled on the night of the performance because 20 came to a concert hall seating 1200. . . .

Perhaps the repertoire of some of the groups and the quality of some of the singing did not measure up to the highest standards. All of the choirs were amateur groups, made up of people who, especially in a city like New York, travel long distances once a week at the end of the day's work, in all kinds of weather, because they crave the musical outlet and the feeling of group unity which comes from singing together. With attendance purely on a voluntary basis and without remuneration, the balance of voices must needs be left partly to chance. . . . What they lacked in artistry was more than offset by the joy and devotion they brought to their singing. This is what Israel hoped for from such a festival. . . .

Through meetings, tours of the land, public and private receptions, and a special concert given for the visiting choirs by Israeli professional musicians, Israelis and guests were brought closer together in spirit and understanding and drew mutual inspiration therefrom.

These values are not musical in nature—perhaps not entirely, but these are the values, as Mr. Vinaver knows, which the Zimriah sought in inviting all Jewish choirs the world over. These are the values which matter most to Israel now. Were it otherwise we should have sought professional choirs—not amateur ones.

A. Propes

Executive Director of Hazamir
New York City

Biblical Criticism

To the Editor of Commentary:

It may be mere captiousness to mention that Moshe Greenberg ("Biblical Criticism and Judaism," March 1953) has not written the article described by the title and subtitle of his piece, but it is not captiousness to point out that the article he *has* written is a scattered and confused exposition of the problems and findings of Biblical textual exegesis. . . .

In the matter of recensions of the original [Biblical] material, it would be well to bear in mind that revisers are not *ipso facto* fools, while the pious retention of conflicting details which has created the difficulties in the text, at the same time serves to authenticate it.

Mr. Greenberg mentions the school of Jewish commentators which included the grandson of Rashi (parenthetically, the name of the Rashbam was Samuel, not Solomon as he has it) and Abraham Ibn Ezra whom he rightly describes as the first modern critic. But he has apparently been rummaging through the Talmud only for curios, to use Schechter's expression. Although Mr. Greenberg declares that it was assumed "that each of the Biblical books was as a rule the complete product of a single author," some eight hundred years before Ibn Ezra the Talmudic Rabbis, though still maintaining the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as a whole, ascribed the last eight verses of Deuteronomy to Joshua (B. Bathra 14b); they asserted that only a part of the books bearing his name had been written by Samuel (B. Bathra 15a); and ascribed to Hezekiah and "his company" the editing of the book

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Isaiah and of part of the Hagiographa, and to the "Men of the Great Synagogue" the editing of the Book of Ezekiel, of the Twelve Minor Prophets, and of other scattered portions of the Bible (B. Bathra 15a). Other portions of the Talmud indicate that it did not need the piercing light of "modern" criticism to show "that the degree of divine illumination has not been the same throughout the ages." Men are divinely inspired, but they are only men subject to their spiritual as well as their physical milieu, and their intellectual and spiritual capacities must determine the form of their presentation of the divine truth which has come to them. "Isaiah and Ezekiel both saw the King," we read in Hagigah 13b, "but Isaiah like one that dwells in a city, Ezekiel like a villager." Even Moses who alone had seen God and was thus the fittest receptacle for the divine outpourings was incapable of revealing the divine truth perfectly (B. Bathra 88b). . . .

VIVIAN JACOBS

East Orange, New Jersey

Yizkor and Sitting Shiva

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In Theodor H. Gaster's interesting article on the significance of Yizkor ("Yizkor: the Living and the Dead," March 1953) he remarks that it has nothing in common with the custom of "sitting *shiva*"; the latter is a "quarantine" with an emphasis on death rather than the "ultimate triumph of the larger life." . . .

Sitting *shiva* hardly involves quarantine. In America, at least, one finds that the mourning period permits a gathering of the clan. It is customary for members of the extended family to visit the bereaved; very often this is the only time relatives see one another over long periods of time. . . . On these occasions talk revolves around recollections of the mourned person, and each relative remembers his own past relationships with the dead person. In other words, the family relives and once again rediscovers its own history with the person who has just died at the center of the stage. . . .

As with the Yizkor service, sitting *shiva* involves, by its very nature, turning towards a memory that "makes alive." What it makes alive and tries to save from the destructive consequences of death is the family group which for the Jew has served as an anchor with which he rides out the storms of his life.

MURRAY HAUSKNECHT

Elmhurst, New York

Inverted Criticism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to inquire what is the clue necessary to understanding Steven Marcus' criticism ("The Highbrow Know-Nothings," February 1953)? He quotes some brilliant prose by Wyndham Lewis and then condemns it. Can it be that he has invented an exciting new style—Inverted Criticism? Under this system would it be correct, for instance, to condemn T. S. Eliot as a lapsed atheist?

PETER KAVANAGH

New York City

I. D. Berkowitz

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the author's note to Mr. I. D. Berkowitz's story in your February issue, "The Chauffeur" (I insist on calling it by its classic title), you have given a wrong impression of his present work. The five-volume memoir of Sholom Aleichem and his novel on Palestine life were both published years ago. At present Mr. Berkowitz is working on the revision of his collected works. There will be a total of about ten volumes; five have already appeared in Israel.

TAMARA KAHANA

New York City

Cummington School of the Arts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I think the following information will be of interest to your readers:

Cummington School of the Arts, Cummington, Mass., offers a few scholarships for writers as well as musicians and painters, of college age or over, to attend the 1953 session, July 6 to August 16. Anyone interested should submit evidence of eligibility to the director, Mr. Francis Golffing, at Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont, before May 1.

As you probably know, the Cummington School has been since its founding in 1926 a nonprofit-making organization endeavoring to further the interests of the fine arts.

ROSETTA N. CORN

Cummington School of the Arts
Cummington, Massachusetts

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Essence of Socialism

SOCIALISM AND AMERICAN LIFE. Edited by DONALD DREW EGBERT and STOW PERSONS. Princeton University Press. 2 vols., 790 pp. and 589 pp. $10.00 per vol., $17.50 the set.

Reviewed by PAUL KECSKEMETI

SOCIALISM has been preached and practiced in America under many guises. First there was the vogue of small model communities—like Oneida, New Harmony, Brook Farm—set up in the wilderness, and dedicated to the task of realizing a vision of fraternal cooperation in perfect unity and equality. Then came Marxism with its emphasis on the class struggle, the grievances and demands of urban labor, and the historical necessity of anti-capitalist revolution. Still later, the emergence of totalitarianism in Soviet Russia caused a split between Stalinists and democratic Marxists. In addition to these main variants of American socialism, there were many other shadings—anarcho-syndicalism, "bread and butter" trade unionism, liberal socialism of an academic tinge, and so on. One feels that there has been some common element in all these currents, regardless of all differences in basic outlook as well as in practical orientation. But it is not easy to spell out the reason for this feeling of a common, "American" inspiration behind such extremely dissimilar ventures as, say, New Harmony on the one hand, and the American Socialist party or, for that matter, the Communist party of America, on the other. Both "utopian" socialism and Marxism in America are different from their European counterparts and originals. I do not mean that there is necessarily a conscious difference in doctrines and principles. The American Communists function as an appendage of the Moscow center and manifest not the slightest independence or originality. But, unlike most of the European Communist parties, they are not, and never have been, a party with a spontaneous, "class-conscious" mass following. And the same is true of the democratic, or "Social Democratic" wing of American Marxism, which, unlike its European counterpart, has always been a marginal, sectarian affair cut off from the mainstream of political life. What is it in the American political, social, and cultural climate that prevents socialism from playing a role in it analogous to that of European socialism?

IN SEARCH of an answer, we turn to a monumental, supposedly exhaustive, two-volume study of American socialism that was published last year at Princeton, *Socialism in American Life*. Its first volume consists of essays by various hands on various aspects of the subject; the second of an annotated bibliography.

A magnificent chapter, by Daniel Bell, on Marxian socialism in the United States amounts to an exhaustive clinical study of the decay of Marxism on American soil. The main reason for the failure of Marxism as a functioning political movement in the United States has been, as Mr. Bell sees it, its inability to solve the problem of living "*in* but not *of* the world." The socialist movement in America "could not relate itself to the specific problems of social action in the here-and-now, give-and-take political world." Wedded to an *ethical* postulate, the movement did not succeed in bridging the gap between ethics and practical politics.

This, it seems to me, really goes to the heart of the matter. A typical pattern in American life, recurring in many contexts, is that ethical goals and principles get in the way of effective, day-to-day political action. As a result, either principles or practice suffer, and the alternative becomes ineffectual, abstract "idealism," or unprincipled "opportunism." It is not that Americans tend to swing between an excess of idealism, on one hand, and of cynicism, on the other, but that American idealists typically expect their ideals to be attained automatically by the spontaneous banding together at the grass-roots level, of people who agree with them. For the American, a hierarchically structured, power- and pressure-orien-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ted group devoted to idealistic human ends is a contradiction in terms. For the European, it is not. Hence, in Europe, hyper-idealistic, utopian definitions of ultimate socialist goals did not prevent the creation of rigidly disciplined mass organizations that worked to attain finite, immediate aims. In America, however, as Bell shows, American socialists, while setting themselves grandiose economic and political objectives, refused to descend into the economic and political arena where actual struggles were waged for actual gains. It was inevitable that the mass of people refused to follow them and chose, instead, leaders and organizations that did so descend.

The "class" organizations of American labor, interested in economic gains, discovered that success depended on political neutrality; thus the unions learned to shun identification with any political party. At the same time, American political parties discovered that their own success depended on not being identified with any social class. The American socialist parties, functioning only as class parties, lost all purpose and, degenerating into debating societies, preserved a semblance of vitality only in a few large cities. The fatal mechanism of this process emerges with clarity from Bell's pages.

Still, this explanation would have gained in depth, I think, if the contrasting development of the European Marxist movements had been traced, at least in outline. The book does contain a chapter by Harry W. Laidler on European socialism since 1848, but whenever he stops shrilly crying in triumph at "socialism on the march," he offers nothing but a rehash of socialist party programs and of the debates between Kautsky, Bernstein, and other venerable figures. We learn nothing about the actual political roles played by socialist parties in European countries, nothing about the challenges they faced and how they met them.

THE historical contributions to the book—Stow Persons on "Christian Communitarianism in America," T. D. Seymour Bassett on "Secular Utopian Socialists," and Daniel Bell's essay—taken together, give an impression of diversity, without a common core, a defining principle of socialism as such, emerging from them. There are, however, a number of more analytical papers that attempt, repeatedly, to establish a basic principle common to all shades of "socialism" and in terms of which we can distinguish socialists from non-socialists. Of course, the contributors differ among themselves, but, as I have said, there is at least some convergence towards a definition, a dominant leitmotiv that for the authors seems to be the prototype.

We first meet with this criterion for "socialism" in the Introduction, where the editors, having duly acknowledged the extraordinary variety of socialist creeds and methods, try to boil down, in one brief formula, their basic common premise. This, they say, is "the belief that only through some form of collective organization, some form of collective action, can the individual come nearest to fulfilling his potentialities." This idea is amplified by Professor George W. Hartmann, who writes of "the psychology of American socialism" that:

> . . . *socialism is distinctive in that its psychological essence lies in its espousal of an all-embracing plan of organization for meeting the basic needs of the persons included within its scope.* Its conscious aim, by contrast with non-socialist systems, is to inventory and catalogue the major wants of mankind and then to plan the structure and functions of the whole economy around them. All people require an optimum amount of nutrition; ergo, the collectivity, whether a demonstration 'colony,' a vast empire, or even a unified world state, ultimately assumes the responsibility for seeing that such food is provided to the citizens. In principle, every evolving need (no matter how elaborate, provided it is common to enough members) can be most effectively met by the advanced pattern of cooperation which socialism represents and advocates.

Another variant of the "criterion" is provided by David F. Bowers in a chapter on the socialist philosophy of history:

> In essence the socialist solution to the problem of historical ends consists of three assertions. One of these is that the goal of history is the intellectual, moral, and physical perfecting of the individual. Another is that realization of the goal will be brought about, and indeed can only be brought about, by some form of collectivized society. According to the third, this goal will actually be reached within a definite period of time.

Bowers' definition is the best, tersely adumbrating the utopia that actually gives all socialist thinking about the meaning and direction of history its distinctive coloring. The editors' definition is so general and noncommittal as to be useless: after all, how could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any individual come nearest or even second-nearest to realizing his potentialities, except through "some sort of" collective organization and action? Hartmann's version, on the other hand, has special distinction: it reproduces with terrible fidelity all the clichés that dog—not every school of socialist thought—but the kind of socialism now popular in many American intellectual circles. All the *non sequiturs*, the evasions of basic problems and the question-begging, dogmatic arrogance that distinguish this kind of thinking, are present.

Socialism, as we see, becomes essentially a technical problem. A set of "data"—that is, a complete inventory of "needs"—determines, all by itself, the distribution of all goods and advantages. No matter how much "needs" may conflict—within the same individual, and between one individual and group and another—we do not have to worry: when the "needs" are put through the wringer, nothing but "advanced cooperation" can come out. That we shall also have plenty and freedom goes without saying; after all, the economic machinery is structured "around" needs, and what does man need more than plenty and freedom? The question whether we *shall* have what we need is solved by a definition. That freedom is rigorously ruled out the very moment we adopt this technological image of the good society does not bother this kind of socialist intellectual. He sees no problems of human choice because, for him, nothing exists but depersonalized, inventorized, neutral "needs" among which an impersonal machine can make a choice. Let us only take away man's humanity and he will not want or fight for his freedom.

Not all the authors represented in the volume show this lack of sensitivity to the problem of freedom under socialism. The essays by Sidney Hook and Will Herberg are particularly good; they see the preservation of freedom as the foremost task of the socialist planner. Both writers, shocked profoundly by the dreadful excesses of Soviet totalitarianism, wish to purge the Marxian doctrine of those elements in it which invite totalitarian use or misuse. For them it is not enough to define socialism as a system that automatically satisfies all needs, including that for freedom; they call for explicit guarantees that would safeguard democratic freedoms under any socialist system.

Unfortunately, Herberg and Hook, too, seem to take it for granted that the problem is merely whether one *wants* to preserve freedom under socialism, and not whether one *can* do so. I think there are some very serious sociological reasons for doubting this—reasons that have nothing to do either with hasty generalizations from the Soviet case, or with the usual type of *laissez-faire* apologetics. At the same time I recognize that serious arguments can be made for the socialist side. It would, perhaps, have been too much to ask that a really searching and critical discussion of the problem of the possibility of freedom under integral socialism be included in a work of this kind—but was it necessary to ignore the problem altogether?

Socialism will inevitably become an essentially technological proposition if we accept the formulation of the socialist principle that prevails in the work under discussion: namely, that socialism is fundamentally concerned with establishing a type of society that will enable its members to "satisfy their needs" or "realize their potentialities." It seems to me that the choice of this criterion obscures insight into the nature and meaning of socialism as a historical, cultural, and social phenomenon. Not that the initiators of socialist movements, or their followers, would have *disagreed* with the principle so formulated. Statements of it abound in the history of socialism. The important thing to realize is, however, that socialist thinking and action are not articulated the way this "criterion" suggests. They do not start from premises about "individual needs" and proceed to devise the "means" required to satisfy them. The socialist principle is not a kind of syllogism reading: we know that human beings have such and such needs; *ergo*, we shall make such and such arrangements to satisfy them. Socialism, as a political and cultural phenomenon, was not born from this kind of speculation, but, in every case, from indignation, rather, at the actual state of society, and indignation in particular at the role and behavior of a privileged minority. Men have become socialists, whether as initiators or as followers, after discovering the fact of the "iniquitous appropriation," by the few, of the basic goods, spiritual and material, that ought by right to be shared by all.

The distinctive trait of all socialism, utopian and "scientific," religious and atheistic, anarchist and statist, is the conviction that the key problem of society is constituted by the existence or non-existence of "iniquitous appropriation." All the socialist expectations of unbound-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JEWISH APOCRYPHAL LITERATURE

Edited by

Outstanding Jewish Authorities

and sponsored by

THE DROPSIE COLLEGE

THE FIRST BOOK OF MACCABEES

Translation by Sidney Tedesche
Commentary by Solomon Zeitlin

Here is a brilliant restoration of an historic literary religious document that every serious reader of Jewish Literature will cherish. Dr. Tedesche's translation has been hailed as "the best ever, in any language." Dr. Zeitlin's brilliant introduction includes an authoritative account of the establishment of the Second Jewish Commonwealth. **$4.00**

ARISTEAS TO PHILOCRATES

("Letter of Aristeas")

Another valuable study in the Jewish Apocryphal Literature series, this one treating a work purporting to give an account of the genesis of the Septuagint. **$4.00**

Forthcoming: III-IV MACCABEES *April 15*
II MACCABEES

Published by HARPER & BROTHERS
49 EAST 33rd STREET, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE OLDEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A leading oriental scholar unveils the folklore of the Near East

The fascinating legends of ancient cultures—Babylonian, Hittite and Canaanite—are now brought vividly to life, many of them translated for the first time. "Dr. Gaster is that rara avis, a student of ancient tongues who is as much concerned with the graces of a living language as with the fossils of a dead one. Along with erudition he has the gift of a true story-teller."—MILTON RUGOFF, *New York Herald Tribune*

$5.00

by Dr. Theodor H. Gaster

THE VIKING PRESS

PERSECUTION AND THE ART OF WRITING. By LEO STRAUSS

Studies of Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, Halevi's *Kuzari*, and Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. $4.00

"No doubt there will be scholars who will respectfully dispute Professor Strauss on just about every point. They will find, as many already know, that he is a most formidable opponent. And if in time the victory goes to Professor Strauss he will have accomplished nothing less than a revolution in intellectual history."

Irving Kristol, Commentary

ON TYRANNY
By LEO STRAUSS $2.50

ANCIENT JUDAISM
By MAX WEBER $6.00

ESSAYS ON FREEDOM AND POWER
By LORD ACTON $6.00

From your favorite bookseller or

THE FREE PRESS
Glencoe, Illinois

ed plenty, unlimited freedom, and unblemished physical, moral, and intellectual perfection are logically tied to this basic postulate. *Without iniquitous appropriation, there can be no evil on earth*—this is the socialist principle.

It is not hard to see why the historically potent, negative, explosive, and original principle of socialism has been replaced by a pale and neutral derivative in this academic discussion of socialism. In its original, historic form the socialist principle is too value-laden to permit really "scientific" treatment. We must reformulate it in terms of purely factual, neutral, uncontroversial "data." But this original principle of socialism is too "controversial" in a political sense, too. Most of the actual, historical evidence we have goes against it: the elimination, on the Marxist pattern, of "iniquitous appropriation" has completely failed to insure the disappearance of evil from society.

There is no doubt that, from a public-relations point of view, the harmless, bowdlerized, academic definition of socialism given in *Socialism in American Life* is more useful than the old slogans and articles of faith that have inspired socialist movements throughout history. "Socialism," in the hands of the Princeton contributors, has surely achieved respectability. And just as surely, it has lost its historical identity, its stark cataclysmic appeal, its soul.

The German Problem

OUR LOVE AFFAIR WITH GERMANY. By HANS HABE. Putnam. 247 pp. $3.00.
THE RETURN OF GERMANY: A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES. By NORBERT MUHLEN. Regnery. 310 pp. $4.50.
GERMANY PLOTS WITH THE KREMLIN. By T. H. TETENS. Schuman. 294 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by HAL LEHRMAN

"How old is she?" Socrates asked a parent complaining about his daughter's disposition. "Four," said the father. "Alas," said the philosopher, "she's too old to change."

Hans Habe, who tells this tale with approval in another German context, implicitly rejects its application to the larger problem of making Germany safe and sane for the West. So do the writers of two other new books

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the same subject. All concur in thinking that the situation can be changed for the better. But they differ on *how* and, with varying skill and science, they disagree completely on *what* is wrong.

Mr. Habe and T. H. Tetens, for sometimes opposite reasons, deplore American policy. They advocate revisions which conflict in method and temper. But they do hold in common that it is the Germans, after all, who must be curbed, and that only a stiffer rein can do it. By contrast Norbert Muhlen is much more hopeful about the Germans' democratic potential. He seems, in fact, to find them very often right and the West nearly always wrong. He, too, wants American policy to change, but in the direction of giving more freedom to the Germans.

Of the three critiques, Mr. Tetens may shock the reader most but should detain him least. The author of *Germany Plots with the Kremlin* is singularly genial toward the Eastern partner in this alleged conspiracy. For him the villains are the Germans—of all parties and persuasions—who are systematically betraying us by means of our own blind generosity; and certain sinister, unidentified elements in the Pentagon and State Department who secretly reversed Roosevelt's "sound postwar program for a realistic treatment of Germany and friendly relations with Russia" on the very day FDR was buried.

If I read Mr. Tetens correctly, it must have been *we* who stopped being "friendly" with the Russians, so that they had to get mad at us in self-defense. No Soviet propagandist could improve on such chronology.

Mr. Tetens offers no proof—except Drew Pearson—for the macabre compact supposedly struck over Roosevelt's bier. Nor does he substantiate his hydra-headed thesis that the Bonn government is, at one and the same time, planning (1) to bring about peace in Europe between the United States and the USSR by making Germany a militarily invincible neutral; (2) to push the idea of a United Europe long enough to give equality to Germany and then dominion over the Continent and Africa; (3) to quit NATO eventually in exchange for Soviet territorial bribes; (4) to join the Russians outright and rule the world together; and (5) to rule the world by herself.

All this is possible. But Mr. Tetens alleges everything and demonstrates nothing. He has

A BORZOI BOOK

A warm, deeply human portrait of Jewish life in America

COMMENTARY ON THE AMERICAN SCENE

Edited from the pages of *Commentary* *by* ELLIOT E. COHEN
Introduction by David Riesman

This entertaining and colorful picture of Jewish middle-class life and culture covers a broad and rich territory. Selected in the main from *Commentary's* widely-read department, "From the American Scene," these twenty vivid pieces range from Harry Gersh's delightful account of the contemporary eccentric, the Jewish *paintner*, to William Poster's brilliant reminiscence of growing up in Brooklyn's wild and wooly Brownsville, Wallace Markfield's rendering of that uncertain trade, the Seventh Avenue garment business, the New Eden in San Francisco, the Jewish delicatessen, the Trojans of Brighton Beach, the new farmers of Lakewood, and the Jewish college student, New Model.

$3.75 at all bookstores, or:

ALFRED A. KNOPF, Inc.
501 Madison Ave., New York 22, N.Y.
Please send me ..... copy(ies) of *Commentary on the American Scene* at $3.75 each.
☐ Payment herewith ☐ Send C.O.D.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ **Zone**____ **State**_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simply compiled and stitched together—with great noise and repetition—a mass of news stories, editorial extracts, speeches, "confidential talks," wartime and postwar scraps from Nazi archives, and similar miscellanies from all over. By this procedure one can prove anything. The "plot" in the very title is a piece of extravaganza, since plotting between Moscow and Bonn requires communication, and he indicates none. Mr. Tetens, advertised as "a naturalized American of German origin, an outstanding authority on geopolitics and pan-Germanism," may have returned to his native land to prepare his book—but there is no evidence even of that. He could have done just as well by subscribing to a clipping bureau.

HUNGARIAN-BORN Hans Habe carries better credentials as a first-hand observer: editor-in-chief of eighteen American-sponsored newspapers in occupied Germany, founder of the *Neue Zeitung* as an American major, editor of two important German weeklies as an American civilian. Claiming to have been frustrated in his labors by Communist-Nazi intrigue and official American obtuseness, he carries a visible ax but grinds it only rarely. In the main, his account of American blunders and German knavery is reasoned and impersonal.

Our "love affair," Mr. Habe contends, was unfortunate when Germany wooed us, and is unfortunate now that we are wooing her. In the first phase, we were absurdly elusive; in the second, we are desperately overeager. Our positive achievements—for example, the economic aid which stopped Communism dead—have been nullified by colossal political ineptitude.

We demanded "unconditional surrender," he recalls, and prolonged the war, but then we scrapped the theory of collective guilt on which that demand had been based, and in the end became more lenient than "conquered Germany would ever have dared" to hope. "Non-fraternization" resulted only in 94,000 illegitimate children and a permanent grudge against us. "Re-education" was administered by amateurs who thought it meant remaking Germany in America's exact image—like the Military Governor who insisted on dressing his local German police in Texan uniforms. In the black market "we sold too many cigarettes to sell democracy at the same time." Nor did the haughtiness of our *Besatzungsweiber* (occupation wives) and the luxury of our personnel endear the American Way. "Denazification" punished little culprits, let many a big one go. First we barred Germans from helping in democratization, abjured them to honor the Russians, blocked Germany's reconstruction in favor of other countries, threatened to "decartelize," and denounced militarism. Now we have surrendered democratization entirely to the unreformed Germans, made anti-Communism a chief symbol of political virtue, spurred Germany's recovery at a rate alarming to her neighbors, abetted the revival of old-style capitalism, and pleaded with the generals to belt on their pistols again.

By failing to clean house summarily when the defeated Germans were most susceptible to change, Habe admits, we missed our one great occasion. He also concedes that our violent veerings of tack were due more to final realization of the Soviet threat than to any spontaneous changes of mind. But the results are nonetheless monstrous, he maintains. The Nazis are not just "coming back," he writes, listing the proofs—they "are back already." Reactionary *Unterwanderung* (tunneling) has undermined the democratic parties. The German population has salved its conscience by dismissing Hitler as a "paranoiac idiot," while exonerating those who made him possible; West Germany is indefensible for some years to come; the Germans don't want to fight, especially not for us; the nucleus of the future army is anti-American and militarist. Germany rearmed, Habe foresees, will be able to bully Europe, blackmail the United States, dally profitably with East Germany and the Soviets, and soon develop a regime akin to Hitler's in everything except name.

MR. HABE may be letting his pessimism outdistance his facts but Norbert Muhlen—born and educated in Germany, frequent commuter there now from New York—is so optimistic that he scarcely halts to consider German rearmament and its awesome potential at all. To be fair, it must be said that Mr. Muhlen's book is primarily not about the West German menace but "a tale of two countries"—the two current Germanies. He demonstrates that the Western half is a "welfare state" where men are tolerably free, and that the Eastern half is a "workers' state" where men are slaves. He lays bare the stifling tyranny in the totalitarian East over the "Soviet man of German make"—the fetishism of the party card, which must

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What is the Jewish attitude toward Intermarriage? ... Drinking? ... Birth Control?

Do Jews believe in Heaven and Hell? ... that they are the "Chosen People"?

These and over a hundred other provocative questions are answered in this book by

RABBI MORRIS N. KERTZER

WHAT IS A JEW?

A stimulating, distinguished work, expanding Dr. Kertzer's famous articles in LOOK and READER'S DIGEST. Required, informative reading for every Christian and Jew. *At your bookseller's, $2.50*

THE WORLD PUBLISHING COMPANY
Cleveland and New York

Have you read **ISRAEL**—the great history of the Jewish people, by Rufus Learsi? $5.00

SPINOZA SOCIETY OF AMERICA
Study Group on Spinoza Ethics meets monthly.
Inquire PROFESSOR W. BERNARD
Long Island University
Paramount Building
Brooklyn 1, New York

Are you an **AUTHOR** looking for a publisher?

TIME Magazine (June 23, 1952) says of EXPOSITION: "Gives its writers a contract whose terms are frank & clear, sends out review copies & releases, builds publicity & promotion..."

Send for free 32-page brochure **"WE CAN PUBLISH YOUR BOOK"**

EXPOSITION PRESS
386 Fourth Avenue • New York 16, N. Y. Dept. 34

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Announcing—

THIRTEEN AMERICANS

Their Spiritual Autobiographies

Edited by *Louis Finkelstein*

Thirteen distinguished Americans—men and women whose lives have been characterized by outstanding service to mankind—describe what they believe and how their faith came into being. Erwin D. Canham, Judith Berlin Lieberman, Julian Morgenstern, Basil O'Connor, David de Sola Pool, and Channing H. Tobias are among the contributors. $3.00

MOMENTS OF PERSONAL DISCOVERY

Edited by *R. M. MacIver*

"At that moment my imagination struck fire"—the recollection of such a turning point in their individual outlooks on life, in their conceptions of the reality to which they belong, is retold in this book by twelve men and one woman. The distinguished contributors include Mordecai M. Kaplan, Lawrence S. Kubie, Margaret Mead, Joseph M. Proskauer, Harlow Shapley and Paul Weiss. $2.00

Publications of The Institute for Religious and Social Studies

At your bookstore or from

HARPER & BROTHERS

49 E. 33rd St. New York 16

be worn next to the skin ("this is the most beautiful thing a girl can own; she should be proud of this bulge under her dress," said one editorial); the portrait of East German President Wilhelm Pieck in maternity wards so that "every patient can know she is protected in her pains"; the sentences of ten and fifteen years at hard labor on sixty-eight high school boys for throwing stink bombs during a Communist festival; the death sentence on Hermann Joseph Flade, aged eighteen, for printing and distributing "treasonable" leaflets ("*Die Freiheit ist mir mehr wert als das Leben,*" he told a Red court). In his discussion of the gulf between East and West Germany, Mr. Muhlen is measured and eloquent—more penetrating by far than Mr. Habe in his cursory treatment of the same theme.

Regrettably, the Muhlen analysis of West Germany vis-à-vis the United States lacks an equal degree of persuasiveness. His main concern seems to be the German mind, which he is intent on capturing for America before the Soviets grab it. Habe, who is just as anti-Soviet, is concerned lest the German army and state capture us. Muhlen criticizes our policies as hard as Habe does, but accepts only a small part of Habe's strictures on the Germans. True, Muhlen denounces the idea of collective German innocence, along with collective German guilt. He chides the Germans for swallowing Red propaganda shibboleths, knuckling down to the authority of their *Obrigkeiten* (officialdom), showing small civic interest or democratic spunk, clinging to their narrow national egotism. But his general tendency is to absolve Germans in the mass as "unpolitical," blame the Americans (whom some Germans regard as "Russians with creased pants") for many of the German failings, and explain away certain German aberrations which are not so easily dismissable.

Reading the two books side by side is almost like listening to a debate. Where Habe criticizes the American press for sluggish reporting about Nazi resurgence, Muhlen rebukes the same press for scare-mongering. (My own two visits to postwar Germany give me no reason to share Muhlen's confidence that neo-Nazism "seemed destined to failure"—and recent dispatches about arrests of sub-Fuehrers are not entirely reassuring.) There has indeed been scare-mongering on occasion, and much out-of-hand damnation of all the Germans as unredeemed and unredeemable. But in his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

essentially commendable desire to provide a corrective, Muhlen comes dangerously close to alighting on the opposite pole. Straining to project the very real democratic potential of the "decent" Germany, he regrettably lapses into near obliviousness—at least in this book—of the equally real German potential for evil. Thus, he notes only that the Freie Deutsche Partei contains some "conservative, if not reactionary, elements"; he is quite angry with the Socialists' late Kurt Schumacher but passes over the Deutsche Partei in silence. Habe finds it more pertinent to describe the sub-rosa Nazi proclivities of the FDP and the open pro-Fascism of the DP (both of them forming part of the "democratic" Bonn coalition). Muhlen glides over Nazis in the administration while Habe nails them down. There is little or nothing in Muhlen's book, much in Habe's, about the power and prestige of Hitler's generals today, the existence of a secret General Staff, the possible havoc of a German military Frankenstein.

WHICH emphasis is better placed? The reader may perhaps judge for himself from the two approaches to the Jewish problem. Habe finds the reparations agreement with Israel an impressive proof of the Adenauer group's sincerity, but notes the pact's unpopularity in Germany, the German readiness to call all black-marketeers Jews although most are not Jews, and the German desire "to see as many Jews as possible on our *Autobahnen* [as tourists from abroad] and as few as possible in our universities." The Germans of today, Habe quotes another observer, "don't want to burn those Jews who are already dead."

Muhlen characteristically presents documents to argue that the German population was not really anti-Semitic even in Hitler's day—when presumably not all of them were willing to cooperate in mass murder. He makes the suggestion that the July 20 attempt on Hitler's life was partly motivated by feeling against Jewish persecution. By stressing the coldness of the Jews and the dignity of the Bonn representatives in the reparations affair, he seems to be losing sight of the unforgettable brute realities that lie behind Jewish emotion.

Philip Auerbach, Jewish State Commissioner for the Persecutees of Hitler, committed suicide after conviction for embezzlement and accepting bribes. Muhlen calls him "an ambitious, impressive, perhaps mentally disturbed

ENJOY A QUÉBEC VACATION
IT IS DIFFERENT!

Tour the rugged picturesque Gaspé Peninsula, the mighty St. Lawrence river, the deep swift-flowing Saguenay, the beautiful Laurentian Mountains, and the Eastern Townships, with their countless sparkling lakes and rivers. Visit the famous shrines and churches of French-Canada and enjoy old-time hospitality in comfortable modern inns and hotels.

LA PROVINCE DE
Québec

To help plan your vacation, write for free road maps and booklets to:- Provincial Publicity Bureau, Parliament Buildings, Québec City, Canada; or 48 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

adventurer," dwells on the fact that the man who arrested him had a good anti-Nazi record; says that "while many charges against Auerbach could not be substantiated, he was found guilty on several counts"; denies aloofly that he was "either a victim of new persecutions [or] the great super-criminal." He leaves no room for Habe's assertions—is Habe wrong?—that Auerbach did not take a penny for himself, that the testimony was manipulated, that three of his five judges were ex-Nazis, that one of the chief prosecution witnesses has since been jailed for perjury, that Schumacher expressed his horror over the case to Auerbach's widow, and that Adenauer contributed to the fund for a monument in Auerbach's memory. And if the Germans tended to think of thieving, black-marketing, gangster-like DP's as Jews, Muhlen argues, this may not have been residual Nazi anti-Semitism but "the old stereotype of the Jew as an economically and socially dangerous outsider to society."

What to do about the Germans? Tetens, after 205 pages of "exposé," recommends in one final paragraph that we should try to persuade the Rusians—in 1953!—to agree to severe quadriparite control; failing that, we must keep the country occupied indefinitely. For Muhlen, the one catastrophe to be avoided is Russian total victory in Germany through failure of the West German "democratic test." Therefore we "must not interfere with . . . the German proponents and friends of freedom." He cautions that "only by an attitude of understanding and brotherhood" can we win Germany as an ally. Maybe so, but Habe thinks it also desirable to have the Germans help the process of fraternity by giving a few guarantees of their own. He offers Bonn the choice of arming or not arming. If they elect the latter, we should apply intelligent control measures to head off their "neutral" interference with our own European defense efforts. If the former, we should take out stringent measures of insurance against the army's re-Nazification and against underground or above-ground flirtation with any species of totalitarianism. For this he makes some specific proposals. One may differ with Habe on details and question whether we have the requisite skill to apply his principles effectively, but, in view of the past and present German record, his stress on reasoned firmness will seem to many friends of a democratic Germany to be the more prudent policy.

Aspects of Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A BIOGRAPHY. By BENJAMIN P. THOMAS. Knopf. 548 pp. $5.75.

IMPRESSIONS OF LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR: A FOREIGNER'S ACCOUNT. By MARQUIS ADOLPHE DE CHAMBRUN. Random House. 174 pp. $2.75.

LINCOLN: A PICTURE STORY OF HIS LIFE. By STEFAN LORANT. Harper. 256 pp. $6.00.

LINCOLN AND THE RUSSIANS. By ALBERT A. WOLDMAN. World. 311 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by EDWARD N. SAVETH

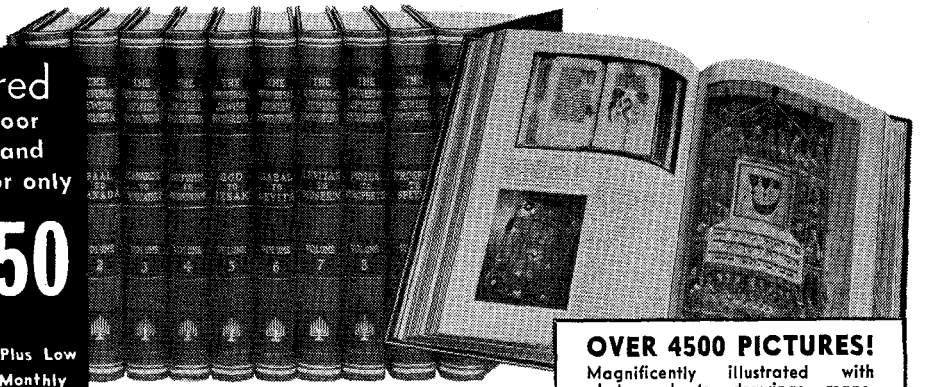
As Benjamin P. Thomas's biography of Lincoln continues week after week on the New York *Times* best-seller list, it may well set in motion a new trend in the writing of American historical biography. Over the past decade and more, multi-volumed biographical treatments of famous Americans have become the vogue. Such works are, in terms of sheer bulk, the 20th-century counterparts of the 19th-century historians' ponderous narrative histories of the sort turned out by Bancroft, Rhodes, McMaster, Schouler, and others. However, whereas the latter historians attempted full treatments of relatively large segments of American history, nowadays most historians who like to write at length turn their attention to the individual and become biographers.

Dumas Malone is doing Jefferson in four or five volumes, of which two have already been published; Douglas S. Freeman has done Robert E. Lee in four, with another three volumes devoted to Lee's lieutenants. The indefatigable Mr. Freeman has also published five volumes of a work on George Washington—and still has to cover Washington's career through the Presidency and his subsequent retirement. The late James G. Randall planned to devote five volumes to a "definitive" biography of Lincoln, but death stayed his hand shortly after the publication of the third volume. Frank Freidel, who has just published the first volume of a projected eight on Franklin Roosevelt, threatens to out-heavy the heavies and start a new division. Mr. Freidel, it should

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now..The Enlightening Literary Treasure of

4000 YEARS OF JEWISH HISTORY, LORE and LEARNING



Delivered to your door complete and postpaid for only

$9.50

Plus Low Monthly Payments

OVER 4500 PICTURES!
Magnificently illustrated with photos, charts, drawings, maps, beautiful color plates of religious articles, temples, manuscripts. A wealth of knowledge for lifetime use.

THE UNIVERSAL JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA

A Monumental Pageant of Judaism • 10 Large, Handsome Volumes

6,500 Pages — 12,500 Articles — 50,000 Biographical References and Sources Covering Every Segment of Jewish Knowledge, including . . .

RELIGION • SCIENCE • HISTORY • LAWS • CUSTOMS • FAMOUS MEN & WOMEN ART • DRAMA • LITERATURE • FOLKLORE • WIT & HUMOR • MUSIC MEDICINE • EDUCATION • CULTURE . . . and many more.

Edited and printed in English, here is the one authoritative source of all Jewish history, lore and knowledge and Jewish-Christian relations. In popular, concise, objective form, *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* bridges the gap between Old World Scholarship and New World enlightenment. In picture and story, here is Judaism itself—its works, people, art, culture, customs, heritage, history, civilizing influences throughout the world.

ANSWERS ALL VITAL QUESTIONS

It clarifies Jewish folklore, tradition, songs, laws, sacred books, rituals, fasts, holidays, philosophy, language, native wit, humor and many other subjects. Graphic tables and charts amplify the text. Included are the animals and plants named in the Bible; outline of hygienic laws and customs; dictionary of popular Biblical and Talmudic phrases.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED AT $125.00

For the first time, this invaluable Encyclopedia is available on small monthly payments. Its inspiring, full treasure of Jewish knowledge is now within the means of all.

Invaluable for Children, Teachers, Rabbis and Clergymen, Parents, Scholars, Writers, Editors, Statesmen and Civic-Minded People Everywhere.

ONLY MODERN ENCYCLOPEDIA IN ENGLISH

Every phase of Jewish opinion is represented. A distinguished editorial board, embracing all three religious groups (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform), approved controversial articles before publication.

REVEALS THOUSANDS OF LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS LIKE THESE:

Which Jews sailed and landed with Columbus in the New World?
Who was known as the Jewish Pope?
Who was the first Jew to be a U.S. state governor?
For what non-Jew was haskhabah first recited?
What is philo-Semitism?

PRAISED BY EMINENT AUTHORITIES

The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia is recognized for completeness and authority the world over. Among others, it has been acclaimed by REV. DR. DAVID DE SOLA POOL, former President, Synagogue Council of America, Rev. DR. EVERETT R. CLINCHY, President, National Conference of Christians and Jews, REBEKAH KOHUT, President, World Congress of Jewish Women, ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, REV. DR. ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN, National Co-Chairman, United Jewish Appeal, SENATOR HERBERT H. LEHMAN, RABBI HERBERT S. GOLDSTEIN, former Pres., Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations.

Examine This Rich Treasure *FREE*

Think of it . . . you can now own *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* without straining the family pocketbook. But you must see . . . you must read this great treasure of knowledge to truly appreciate its incalculable worth . . . its educational and cultural benefits for you and your children! The coupon below brings you all ten volumes for FREE examination in your own home. If you decide to keep it, pay only $10 per month—nothing extra for postage, packing or credit—for just seven months. Otherwise, return Encyclopedia without obligation. This is a limited-time offer. Act Now!

EXAMINE FREE—Mail Coupon Now

THE UNIVERSAL JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA, Dept. C
233 Spring St., New York 13, N. Y.

Please send complete 10-volume THE UNIVERSAL JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA on 10-day trial. I enclose $9.50 and, if I decide to keep it, I agree to send you, in addition, $10 per month for 7 months until full price of $79.50 is paid, paying nothing extra for postage, packing or credit. Otherwise, I will return Encyclopedia prepaid within 10 days and you will refund my $9.50.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Zone..... State.....

Employed by ..... Address.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be observed, is a young man and a rapid worker, but in view of the task that lies ahead of him, one can only wish him godspeed.

I DO not mean to deprecate these monuments of industrious historical scholarship and their claim to be "definitive" treatments. (Though I doubt whether they are that; no book, regardless of length, is "definitive," and every new generation will still have to write its own history of the past.) Dr. Thomas, however, shows the amazing ability to say just about all that the average interested person need know about Lincoln within the confines of a single well-organized and well-written volume; and, what is more, people are buying, reading, and even talking about his book—which is not the case with the expensive multi-volumed "definitives," whose readers must be as dedicated as their writers. I hope that the professional historians will profit by Dr. Thomas's example, and begin to acquaint the American people with their heritage by means of short and readable presentations.

Dr. Thomas deserves particular praise for the way in which he has escaped that dilemma of the biographer which Dumas Malone, for one, holds partly responsible for the tendency to write long rather than short biographies. According to Malone, the historical biographer is frustrated by the inability to expose the well-springs of his subject's behavior, and he tends to compensate for this frustration by discoursing at length on his subject's "times," with the result that his narrative sprawls. As a means of character analysis, some scholars, even Lincoln scholars, have sought to place their subjects within a Freudian framework, hoping thereby to accomplish their work with relative brevity. Such an effort was L. Pierce Clark's *Lincoln: A Psycho-biography*, published in 1933. But, as the late Dr. Randall once said, "Freudian psychoanalysis is one thing, and the transference of Freudian psychoanalysis to biography without adequate biographical or historical basis is a very different thing." Because the very nature of historical evidence limits the value of a Freudian approach, Dr. Thomas has wisely refrained from attempting anything of the sort—and still he has presented an understandable portrait of Lincoln. It is his art as historian, rather than Freudian insight, that has enabled him to strike just the right balance between Lincoln's "life" and his "times"; to cut through the great mass of Lincoln materials so that the true lineaments of character are discernible to the reader.

BUT ONE would have to go far to surpass the Marquis de Chambrun in character portrayal. His book is a particularly good example of first-hand reporting by those who knew Lincoln in the flesh, and should have been published in English long ago.

This is how Lincoln impressed the Marquis early in 1865, shortly before his assassination. "He is exceedingly thin, not so very tall. His face denotes an immense force of resistance and extreme melancholy. It is plain that this man has suffered deeply. His eyes are superb, large and with a very profound expression when he fixes them on you. It cannot be said that he is awkward; his simplicity is too great for that. He has no pretense to having worldly ways and is unused to society, but there is nothing shocking in this, quite the contrary. The elevation of his mind is too evident; his heroic sentiments are so apparent that one thinks of nothing else. Nobody could be less of a parvenu. As President of a mighty nation, he remains just the same as he must have appeared while felling trees in Illinois. But I must add that he dominates everyone present and maintains his exalted position without the slightest effort."

THE Lorant book has some fine pictures and illustrations and the text is better and more complete than in most picture books. I did happen to notice one discrepancy between this and Dr. Thomas's version. Thomas has Lincoln winning the wrestling match in New Salem with Jack Armstrong; according to Lorant, Lincoln got no better than a draw. This kind of discrepancy keeps popping up in books

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about Lincoln, as a result of the contradictory impressions of the "eyewitnesses" upon whom the historian must at times rely. Which goes to show what a hazardous art, or science, history is condemned to be at best.

The least attractive of this batch of Lincoln books is Albert Woldman's *Lincoln and the Russians*—simply because the author has achieved the aim he set himself as a monographist, which was to exhaust a narrow theme. Basing his narrative on the reports to St. Petersburg of Baron de Stoeckl, Russian minister to the United States during Lincoln's administration, Woldman's work is of undeniable value to the specialist. However, as with most monographs, it is long on documentation and quotations from sources but short on effective presentation, synthesis, and explanation. Moreover, the moral of the book—that Lincoln's political collaboration with the Russian Czar offers a precedent for contemporary collaboration between democratic America and Stalinist Russia—is one that, to put it mildly, must be regarded as very dubious.

Children of Poland

MEINE KINDER ("MY CHILDREN"). By LENA KUECHLER. Editions U.P.J., Paris. 336 pp.

Reviewed by
MARCIA EPSTEIN ALLENTUCK

THE modern parallel to *Aycha*, the Book of Lamentations, has come to be known by the Yiddish term *Churb'n-Literatur*. The phrase is correct but inadequate. This literature does not deal with "destruction" in the abstract, but with the kind the Nazis created and its impact upon European Jewry. How Jews responded individually, what collective ethos they evolved—these are its concerns. The contrasts to Lamentations are significant. Our contemporary account is told in many languages, by children as well as adults. Neither one literary type nor one mood predominates: The dreadful objectivity of *The Black Book of Polish Jewry*, Mordecai Gebertig's poignant lyric *"Es brent, Briderlach,"* Anne Frank's whimsical, almost too perceptive journal, are only a few of the theme's variations.

Most relevant is the idea of suffering. *Aycha* sees suffering as a divine retribution for Judah's sin of pride in her days of prosperity: *"Chet chata Yerushalaym"*—"A grievous sin did Jerusalem commit." Chastisement would produce a saving remnant to rise purified and strive for the holy millennium. But for the Jewish survivors of the Nazi trauma, there could be no workable identification of the Nazis as God's rod of wrath, and no explicit choice of dying *Al Kiddush Ha-Shem*—the absolute destruction of any causal relation between what a man is and what happens to him may be said to absolve him not only of atonement but of guilt as well.

By definition we are morally committed to these writings; they call forth immediate assent rather than evaluation. If some touch of art here and there facilitates our response, so much the better; but response there cannot fail to be.

LENA KUECHLER offers us in the present volume verbatim accounts of their wartime experiences by nine Jewish children of Polish birth who, at the telling in 1946, were bound for Israel. Their stories have now been translated into Yiddish but were transcribed in the original Polish by Mrs. Kuechler, one of the founders of the Jewish children's home in Po-

Riverside
MEMORIAL CHAPEL, INC.

FAITH . . . The one lesson that our profession teaches is that the end of living is not the end of human faith . . . The tenderness of people for someone they have lost bears witness to a faith that never dies . . . And we are glad to be worthy of the confidence of those whose vision sees beyond a temporary separation.

NEW YORK • BROOKLYN • BRONX • LONG ISLAND • MIAMI • MIAMI BEACH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

land where they sought temporary asylum soon after the German defeat. She presents to us a document *"poshet un kuntsen"*—"simple and straightforward"—confining her editorial intervention to a sensitive introduction, informative notes, and a division of the children's narratives into five sections dealing with experiences "on the Aryan side," in the villages, in the ghettos, in the camps, and among the partisans in the forests. (A concluding portion shows the efforts of two Polish governesses to save their Jewish charges at great peril to themselves, and indeed there runs throughout the book the thread of Gentile heroism on behalf of Jewish children.) This editorial self-effacement has its disadvantages; if Mrs. Kuechler had been willing to guide the children with sophisticated questioning, they might have been able to present their experiences with more insight. I have had no access to the original Polish text, but the vocabulary of this volume generally lacks the ironic understatement of even the simplest, most concrete Yiddish. But these unmanipulated narratives have their own special impact.

Molly Strasbourg tells how at five years old she denied kinship with her murdered father:

Plutsling hob ich derhert shossen. . . . Ich gib a kuk, es geyt a sheygetz un trogt dos bild fun mayn taten. . . . "Men hot im dershossen," macht er. "Du kenst im?" Ich hob nisht gevolt zogn as ich ken im, vayl er volt zich glaych gechapt . . . un volt alemen tsuploydert, az ich bin a yiddish kind. Hob ich im gezogt: "Neyn, ich ken im nisht. . . ." (Suddenly I heard shots. . . . I look up, and there goes a Pole carrying my father's picture. . . . "They shot him," says he. "Do you know him?" I didn't want to say that I knew him, because he would have gone babbling to everyone that I was a Jewish child. So I told him, "No, I don't know him. . . .")

Eva Schauder, a professor's child, at six years old betrayed her father with the truth:

Oib ich vel zogen a lign, hob ich zich getracht, vel ich hobn a zind, vayl men tore kayn lign nisht zogen. Der tate flegt mir shtendig zogen, az men muz nor zogn dem emes. (If I say a lie, I thought, I'll have a sin, for you mustn't lie. Daddy used to tell me all the time that one must only tell the truth.)

Guilt pursues her like a fury, and her distress is strong throughout her story.

Lies bred distrust; Yorick Goldman, in his early 'teens, asserts: *"Ven ich hob bakent di menshen un dos leben in lager, hob ich shoyn tsu keynem kayn tsutray nisht gehot."* ("When I got to know the people and the life in the camp I didn't trust anyone.") He lived in constant fear that his being a Jew would be discovered during a delousing session: *"A shreklich opkumenish iz far mir geven dos boden zich . . . naket, ven men . . . flegt unz bashpritsen mit Flit."* ("A ghastly experience for me was bathing naked, when they would spray us with Flit.") Yorick sees his denial of Jewishness as a crime: *"Mayn 'farbrechen' iz bashtanen darin vos ich bin a yid un ich shpil di role fun a Polak."* ("My 'crime' was that I am a Jew and played the part of a Pole.")

Yanka Varshavska's pattern of survival is the most striking. At ten she had become an entrepreneur, engaged in smuggling food and clothing, for a high price, into the ghetto and concentration camp near Krakow; against the camp's timeless non-utilitarian existence, her industry and "ambition" became a parody of the dignity of labor. This potential capitalist exercised her moral sense by organizing hiding places for Jewish children, but her own salvation lay in activity. When the ghetto was *Judenrein* and the camp had danced its last *Todestanz*, and when the Germans had fled before the victorious Red Army, *then* she broke down and wandered incoherently through the empty streets:

Ich hob gevolt antloyfen, mir hot zich gedacht, az di daytchen veln mich chapn, opnemen di s'choyre . . . dershissen. . . . Epes hot mich a klem getun baym hartzen. Ich bin gegangen mit di gassen un geveynt. . . . S'hot zich tsusamengekliben bay mir alts vos ich hob ibergelebt, vos andere hoben ibergelebt and oysgeliten. . . . Alts vos ich hob gevust, afile di kleynste narishkayt, hot mir itst azoy shreklich vey getun, az ich hob kiseyder geveynt. S'iz epes geven azoy vi ich volt ersht itst alts bagrifen, vi ersht itst volt sich mayn veytig ongehoyben. (I wanted to run away. I thought the Germans would catch me, grab my stuff, shoot me. . . . I was scared. I walked around the streets and wept. All that I and others had lived through suddenly came together . . . all that I had known, even the smallest foolishness, now hurt me so much that I couldn't stop crying. . . . It was as if I understood it all for the first time, as if only now my pain would begin.)

To COMPARE these children with Anne Frank is unjust. They are in different worlds. Anne Frank in her long confinement achieved an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

outlet by writing, and in the process became an artist. She could describe her moods with a quotation from Goethe, and she could write, "We all have our uses." These children, beleaguered by unrelenting and incomprehensible threats, had to expend themselves in evasions and untruths; the pressures were those of the body, stubbornly material, and there could be no thought of "our uses." By good luck and sheer drive, they survived as Anne Frank did not. Many, perhaps, survived out of mere spite. One of them writes: *"Mir iz gornisht gegangen azoy vegn leben, nur ich hob zich nisht gevolt lozn chapn. Ich hob di daytshen nisht fargunen dem fargnignen oystsushlepen mayn lebn."* ("I wasn't really so keen on living, but I didn't want to be caught. I didn't want to give the Germans the satisfaction of wiping out my life.") Thus the ultimate terror meets the ultimate resistance.

Midwest American

ALWAYS THE YOUNG STRANGERS. By CARL SANDBURG. Harcourt, Brace. 445 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by ISA KAPP

IF WE look back at Henry James's ironic and affectionate portrait of *The American,* we find a hero surprisingly like Carl Sandburg: a restless man who covered a great deal of ground, had few personal aversions, was fond of statistics, and eyed the world steadily but without sophistication. As long as Americans maintain their respect for open spaces and for their national history, Sandburg has nothing to fear from critics who worry about style: most readers will not mind the bumbling indiscriminate prose of *Always the Young Strangers* because they are so eager to read the autobiography of a poet who seems to embody the national virtues.

To an urban reader, however, Sandburg seems unremittingly Midwestern, in the local rather than the "characteristically American" sense. This earnest album of recollections from the poet's first twenty years, like the bellicose, impassioned vignettes of his poetry, is dominated by the image of the vast flat Midwestern plain. Brought up among miles of unvarying wheat and corn fields, identical villages, identical houses and front-yards, Sandburg seems to have been so overwhelmed by the Midwestern scene that he harps on the impersonal reality and slights his own—as he saw it—unprepossessing role; now at seventy-five he enumerates individuals and conditions out of simple deference to the fact that they existed as part of his landscape. We must hear about the albino girl in his class, the talk on education given by a shoestore owner, a crime he read about in the newspapers, a comic routine he once saw in a minstrel show. He is overimpressed by all of these, and underimpressed by himself.

HIS father, a railroad blacksmith, lived by sober and discouraging phrases: "Hard work never hurt anybody," "A nice piece uh proputty," "What good iss it?" And when his son began a conversation about the stars, he stifled it at once with: "We won't bodder about dat now, Sholly." August Sandburg could make a pint of grain alcohol last through the winter by putting one spoon at a time in his cup of black coffee. When he bought a book voluntarily, it was because the seller was Swedish. To a certain extent, he infected his son, who comes to books with awe rather than simple relish. Sandburg speaks of "trying to get my mind around the English Magna Carta," of still looking with a "fishy eye" at books like Irving's *Sketchbook, The Scarlet Letter,* and *Ivanhoe*; he really savors a homespun book of facts like *Hostetter's Illustrated United States Almanac.* Among the first books he owned were vest-pocket biographies of General Beauregard, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Robert Ingersoll, and possibly these were the source of his continuing wide-eyed stares at great men. He never can resist a chance to tell us when he rubbed shoulders with people who were destined to become prominent, even if the occasion involved nothing more than passing them on the road in his milk delivery wagon.

AFTER the panic of 1893, Sandburg's father was earning only sixteen dollars a month, and the second son set out at fourteen to learn a trade. His father's cult of work was not lost on him, and he describes with zest the period of "hard times" and the odd jobs he took to add twelve dollars a month to the family income. But Sandburg had none of his father's feeling for work as an expression of skill. He never felt that he was "cut out" for any of his jobs, but only that he was in the thick of things, reading about the tariff in the news-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

papers he delivered or ordering his own "one and a bun" from a lunch-counter stool. As a barbershop porter he got to see the shining brass rail and tall spittoons of the Union Hotel, where big-time show people stopped off, and found a suave crony who had been to the Chicago World's Fair. On the milk wagon he read Bryan's campaign speeches and argued politics with the boss. In a Kansas City restaurant he washed dishes and listened to the melting songs of the waiter.

Popular songs and sayings intoxicate him. He remembers what he once wrote in autograph albums: "When you are old and cannot see, put on your specs and think of me." He devotes a whole chapter, called "Kid Talk —Folk Talk," to listing every slang expression and stray jingle he ever heard in his childhood, and cherishes exhausted repartees like "You've got bats in your belfry," "He wasn't born last week," "Hello yourself and see how you like it," "It's a sin to steal a pin." The queer thing about his use of this material is the attitude of vague, indiscriminate obligation with which he presents it: it is not exactly part of his own idiom as a writer, yet he does not introduce it with the class snobbery of James or Howells, but in fond retrospect, as one who has outgrown it but does not give it up out of loyalty. In part, of course, he holds on to it as a gesture of assent to the myth of himself as the "poet of the plain people" and the "Lincoln of poetry." The response of a certain class of liberals to such a book as *The People, Yes,* and to Sandburg's sentimental folkishness generally, has surrounded him with a slightly distasteful aura of the Popular Front; actually, however, Sandburg belongs to the more spontaneous and innocent populism of the 1880's.

Whenever he is working or wandering, his memoir carries the tang and spirit of early American journalism, and one wonders how he ever got away from newspapers and into poetry. He takes some trouble to represent himself as an insider, one of "us kids," a member of the baseball team and the "dirty dozen." But, always too quick with his approval to make distinctions and develop his style, and too impressionable to external events to know much about himself, he passes lightly over the moody hobo figure who is probably much more real to his readers. And when he mentions the "bitter and lonely hours" when he thought of doing away with himself, it is only to say that he does not know what came over him. One may find this ingenuousness of his as winning as his spunkiness, his resilience, and his energy; and one may like to think of all these as the "wholesome" American qualities. But the fact is that the center of gravity of our national myth is shifting, and the kind of writer that might today properly be identified as the representative American is likely to spring not from the Western plain but from the flexible boundary at which the nervous, ingenious East meets the indomitable West.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Paul Kecskemeti, philosopher and social scientist, is on the staff of the Rand research organization. His most recent contribution was "How Totalitarians Gain Absolute Power" (December 1952).

Edward N. Saveth teaches American history at the New School for Social Research. He contributed "What To Do About 'Dangerous' Textbooks" to the February 1952 Commentary.

Hal Lehrman, journalist and lecturer, is well known to Commentary readers for his frequent reports on Israel.

Marcia Epstein Allentuck contributes to scholarly journals and is now studying for her doctorate in English literature at Columbia University.

Isa Kapp's work has appeared in *Kenyon Review,* the *Reporter,* and Commentary.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This *I Believe*

By George Orwell*

"ANY writer who accepts or partially accepts the discipline of a political party is sooner or later faced with the alternative: toe the line, or shut up. It is, of course, possible to toe the line and go on writing—after a fashion. Any Marxist can demonstrate with the greatest of ease that 'bourgeois' liberty of thought is an illusion. But when he has finished his demonstration there remains the psychological fact that without this 'bourgeois' liberty the creative powers wither away. In the future a totalitarian literature may arise, but it will be quite different from anything we can now imagine. Literature as we know it is an individual thing, demanding mental honesty and a minimum of censorship. And this is even truer of prose than of verse. It is probably not a coincidence that the best writers of the 'thirties have been poets. The atmosphere of orthodoxy is always damaging to prose, and above all it is completely ruinous to the novel. . . .

"No decade in the past hundred and fifty years has been so barren of imaginative prose as the nineteen-thirties. There have been good poems, good sociological works, brilliant pamphlets, but practically no fiction of any value at all. From 1933 onwards the mental climate was increasingly against it. Anyone sensitive enough to be touched by the *zeitgeist* was also involved in politics. Not everyone, of course, was definitely *in* the political racket, but practically everyone was on its periphery and more or less mixed up in propaganda campaigns and squalid controversies. Communists and near-Communists had a disproportionately large influence in the literary reviews. It was a time of labels, slogans, and evasions. At the worst moments you were expected to lock yourself up in a constipating little cage of lies; at the best a sort of voluntary censorship ('Ought I to say this? Is it pro-fascist?') was at work in nearly everyone's mind. It is almost inconceivable that good novels should be written in such an atmosphere.

"Good novels are not written by orthodoxy-sniffers, nor by people who are conscience-stricken about their own unorthodoxy. Good novels are written by people who are *not frightened.*"

Published as a public service by

THE WELCH GRAPE JUICE COMPANY, INC.

J. M. Kaplan, President

*From "Such, Such Were The Joys"
1953, Harcourt, Brace and Company

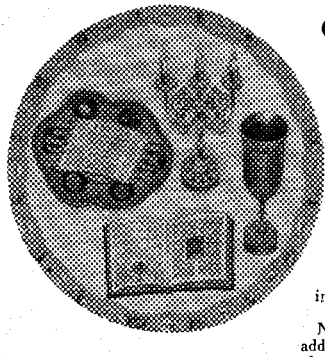
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SEDER... the story of Passover

told on a candy box cover by world famous artist

כשר לפסח

The traditional ancient symbols and customs of Passover beautifully illustrated in full color on the metal cover. Assortment of Barton's famous Continental Chocolate miniatures—Kosher for Passover.
1 lb. **$2.45** 2 lbs. **$4.35**

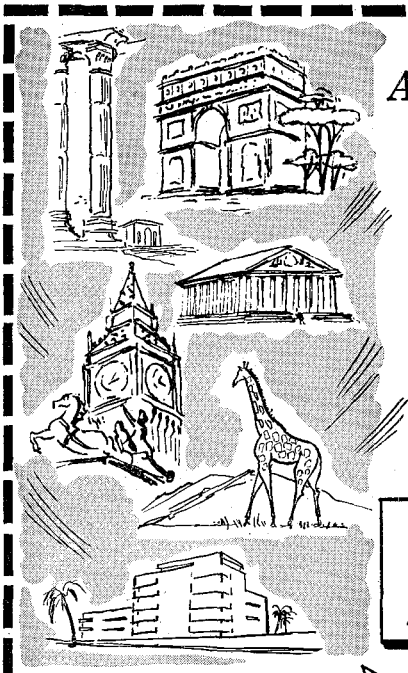


BARTON'S

Ⓤ P bonbonniere

There are 55 Barton's Continental Chocolate Shops in New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Newark. To order by mail, write: Barton's, Dept. X, 80 DeKalb Ave., Brooklyn 1, N. Y. Add 45c *mailing cost for first* lb. *and only* 10c *for each* additional lb. to same addressee. All Barton's shops and factory are closed on the Sabbath and all Jewish Holy Days. Open Sunday.

SEND FOR BARTON'S COMPLETE PASSOVER BROCHURE



A vacation you've dreamed about for years . . . a hurried business trip . . . a family visit

FLY EL AL ISRAEL AIRLINES

Finest and most comfortable tourist service

- only two abreast, fully reclining seats
- no change of planes
- friendly, home-like cabin service

AT LOWEST AVAILABLE FARES

Twice weekly Constellation flights to
LONDON • PARIS • ROME
ATHENS • TEL-AVIV • JOHANNESBURG

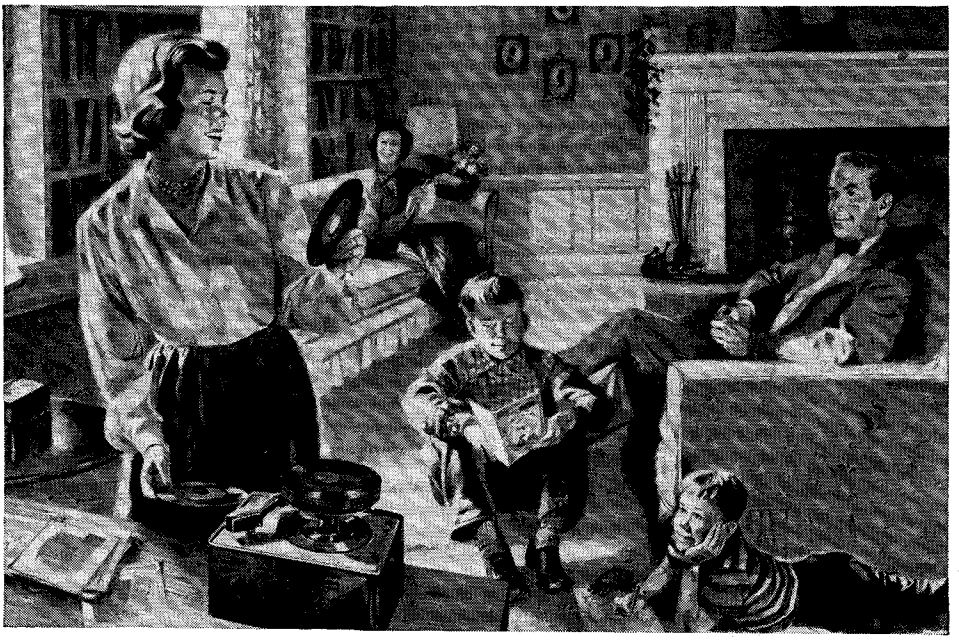
Contact your travel agent or

EL AL ISRAEL AIRLINES

37 West 57th Street, New York City

"An up-and-coming airline of an up-and-coming nation"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Developed by RCA Victor, the new "45 Extended Play" record gives music lovers more music for less money.

Twice as much music on the same size record

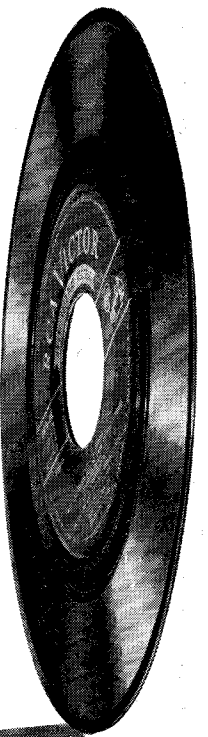
Another RCA achievement in electronics:

A challenging question was asked RCA engineers and scientists in 1951. How can we increase the playing time of a 7-inch record, *without using a larger disc?*

Sixteen months of research gave the answer, "45 EP"—Extended Play. Public response confirmed this as *the most important achievement in the new recording speeds.* More than 2 million RCA Victor "45 EP" records were bought the first four months!

Research leadership—your guide to better value: RCA Victor's "45 EP" record accents the importance of research *to you.* Research adds greater value to all products and services trademarked RCA and RCA Victor.

Secret of "45 Extended Play" record is a new way to cut a master disc —with an electrically heated stylus.



RCA®

RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA

World leader in radio—first in television

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

want a
slimmer
hipline?

*Profile** is your answer! Its diamond-shaped side-panels will *slenderize* your hips; its slim *Flex-Top* does wonders for your waistline: **$12.95**

Profile Bra of nylon taffeta: **$2.95**

Profile — one of the famous figure fashions created by

Flexees®

*Design U.S. Pat.

At better stores. For stores nearest you, write Flexees, Inc., Dept. C., 417 Fifth Ave., N.Y. 16

FIRST AID FOR PROGRAM CHAIRMEN

COMMENTARY has available reprints of the following articles for use in discussion groups, organization programming, and classrooms:

▼

Medical School Quotas and National Health

by Lawrence Bloomgarden, January 1953

Stalin Follows in Hitler's Footsteps

by Peter Meyer, January 1953

The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State

by Will Herberg, November 1952

The Free American Citizen, 1952

by Elliot E. Cohen, September 1952

What to do About "Dangerous" Textbooks

by Edward N. Saveth, February 1952

How Arm Our Children Against Anti-Semitism?

by Bruno Bettelheim, September 1951

▼

These reprints may be obtained for a nominal fee. For information, write to:

Reprint Department
COMMENTARY
34 West 33rd Street
New York 1, New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Chain Reaction" Is An Old Story With Us

"Chain reaction" is a term nuclear physicists have been using lately. It means a series of reactions succeeding one another, each as the effect of the one before it and the cause of the one after it. It might be stated simply as "progressive action."

As early as 1915, the American Oil Company applied this concept to gasoline and came up with a remarkable discovery—a motor fuel that burns in a chain reaction, that burns progressively! It was Amoco-Gas, the original special motor fuel.

Because Amoco-Gas burns progressively, with a smoothly expanding flame-front, it solves the problem of engine knock. Amoco-Gas releases all its power in a steady push. None is wasted by detonation. There's a reason: Amoco-Gas is the only special all-petroleum motor fuel, with nothing added. It burns smoother, it burns cleaner and it keeps engines cleaner.

From Maine to Florida, there's nothing like Amoco-Gas, in any pump, for any car.

AMERICAN AMOCO GAS

AMERICAN OIL COMPANY

Hear "Edward R. Murrow and the News" 7:45 to 8 P. M., Monday thru Friday
CBS stations from Maine to Florida.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As logical...and modern...as automatic shifting

The amazing watch that winds itself

There are some things you want, because they reflect what you are...a man abreast of events...in tune with the times. The car you drive shows it. The Gruen Autowind Watch on your wrist shows it, too. For the handsome Gruen Autowind is the *modern* watch that winds itself automatically as you wear it...that stores up over 30 hours of dependable reserve power with the normal daily movements of your wrist. Completely self-reliant itself, Gruen Autowind gives *you* the same feeling. It never demands attention but invariably attracts a lot. Shock-resistant. Anti-magnetic. Available in water-repellent and luminous dial models.

AUTOWIND SOVEREIGN
17 jewels. 14-karat gold. Faceted crystal. Alligator strap. **$135.00**

AUTOWIND LEADER
17 jewels. Luminous dial. Water resistant. Guildite steel case. **$55.00**

AUTOWIND MARKSMAN
17 jewels. Distinctive case and dial. Expansion band. **$71.50**

GRUEN Autowind

THE PRECISION WATCH—AMERICA'S CHOICE SINCE 1874

Every Gruen Watch is electronically tested and certified for PRECISION * performance only after passing rigorous tests for accuracy and dependability. Official timepiece of TWA—Trans World Airlines. *Trade-marks Registered U.S. Pat. Off.

The Gruen Watch Company, Time Hill, Cincinnati 6, U.S.A. In Canada: Toronto, Ontario. Prices include federal tax and are subject to change without notice.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED